THE FLASH

BY MARK WAID

BOOK ONE

MARK
WAID

GREG
LaROCQUE

JOSÉ
MARZÁN JR.

DC

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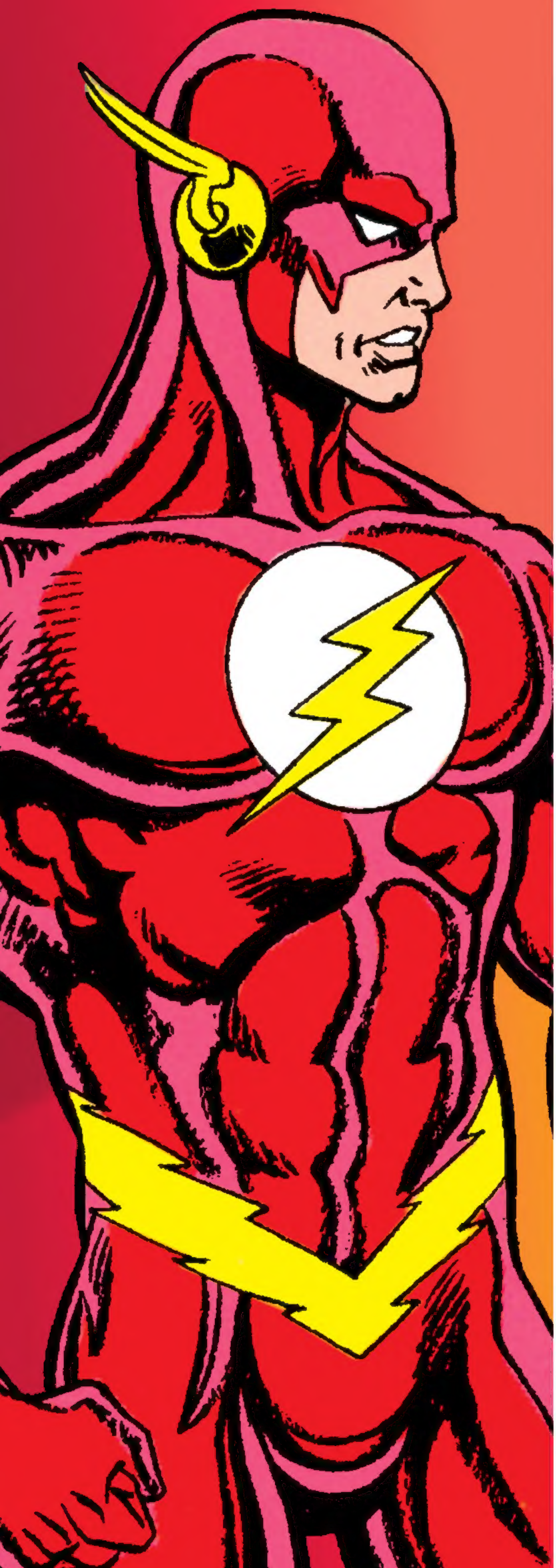

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FLASH BY MARK WAID BOOK 1
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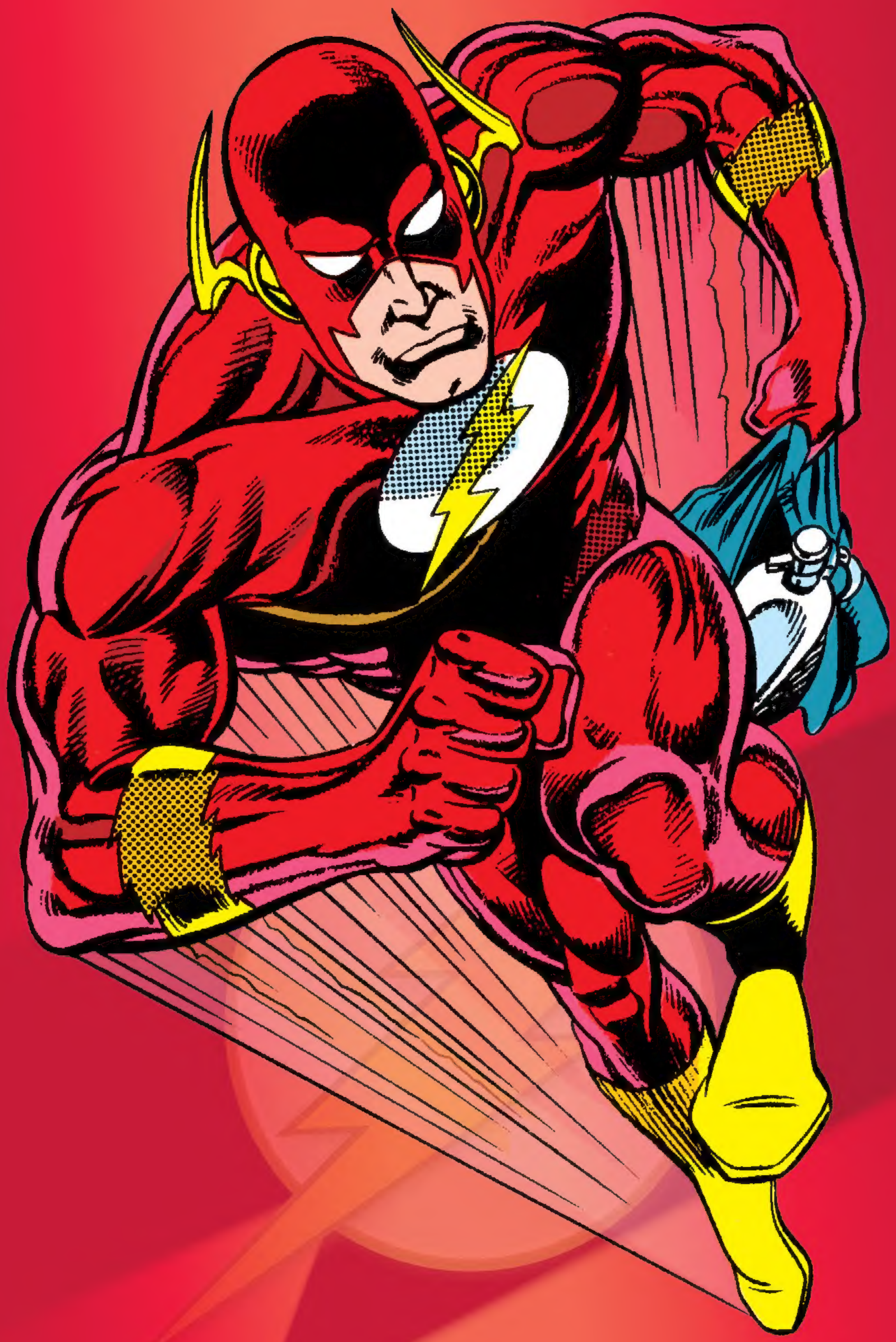

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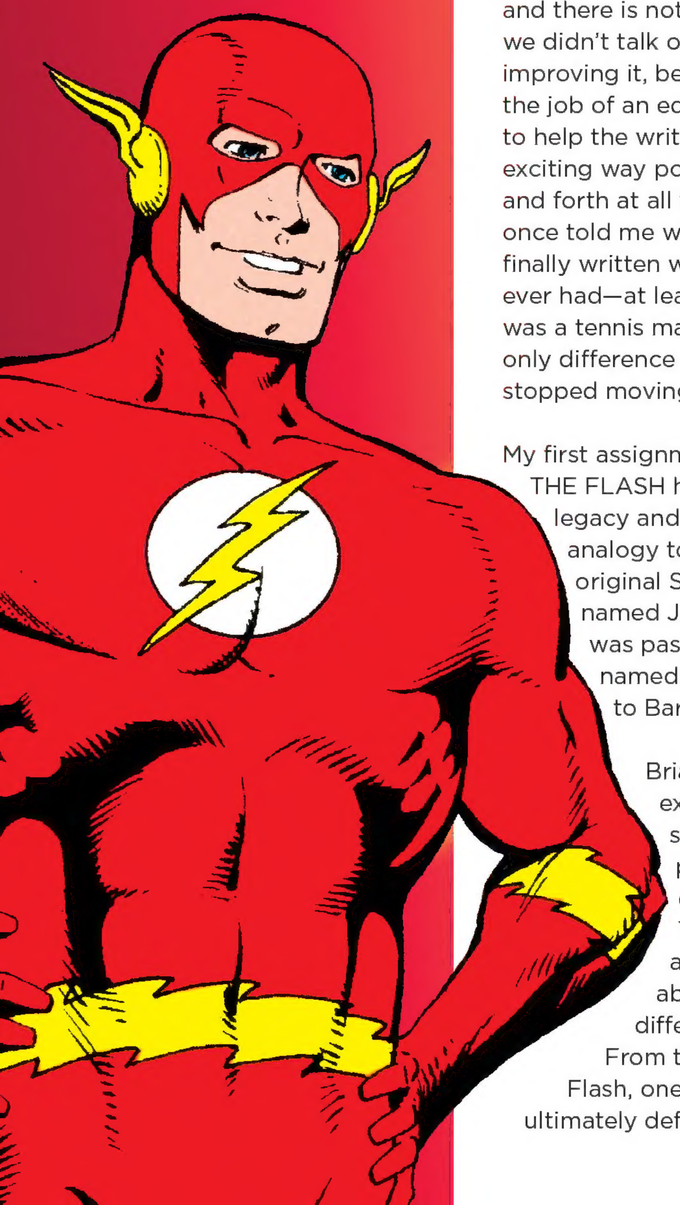
INTRODUCTION

My name is Mark Waid, and I'm the luckiest writer alive.

In 1990, my comics résumé was pretty thin. I'd sold a couple of Superman stories to DC Comics editor Julius Schwartz back in '85 and had parlayed that into...nothin'. Really, nothin'. When I was interviewed for a staff editor job at DC a few years later, I doubt anyone in the room had ever even read those stories, but I was offered the position nonetheless. I wasn't there long—a little more than two years—but I was there long enough to blunder into the smartest professional move I ever made, and that was to forge a bond with the editor of THE FLASH.

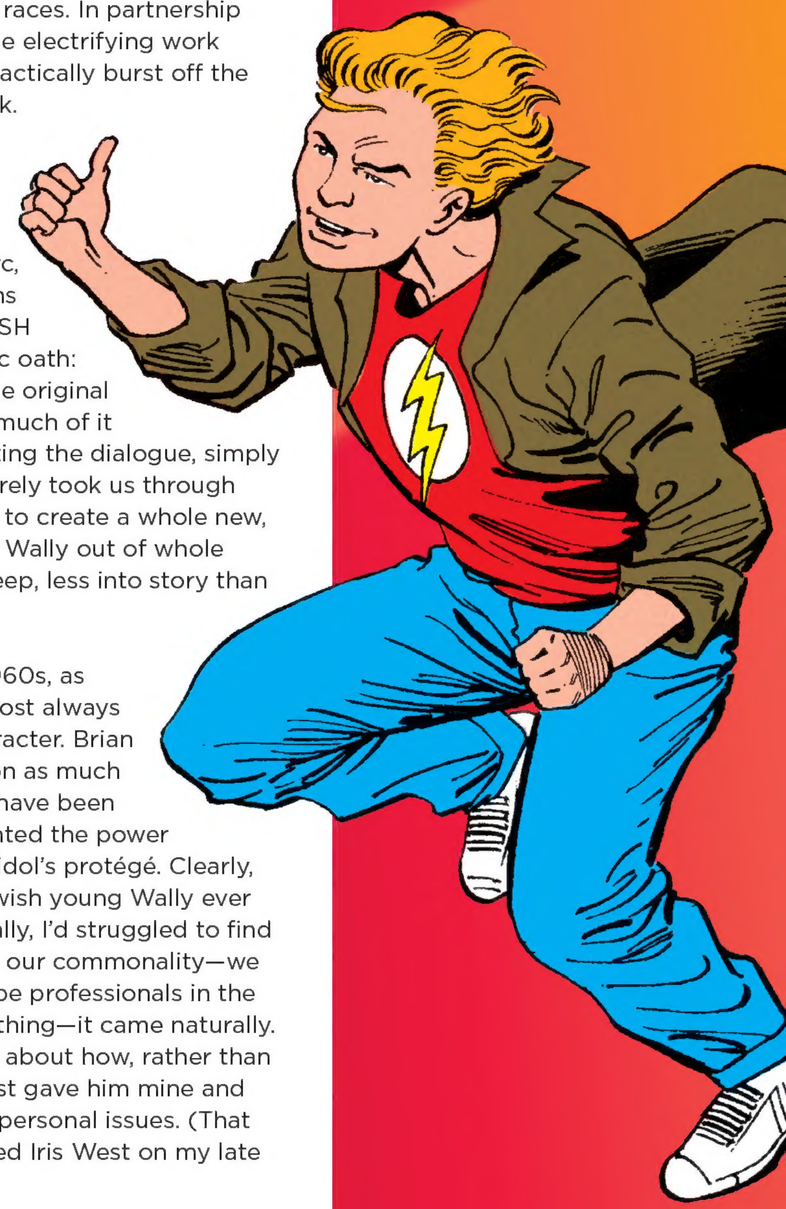
In the following pages and for some volumes to come, you're about to see how much of my career I owe to Brian Augustyn, my fellow staffer and, in quick order, one of my best friends. Brian, DC's Flash editor, knew of my love for the Fastest Man Alive—a love he shared—and there is not one single Flash script I ever wrote that we didn't talk over in detail, twisting and turning and improving it, before it went to an artist. Brian knew that the job of an editor was not to dictate a story but, rather, to help the writer tell his or her story in the best, most exciting way possible. We'd gleefully bat ideas back and forth at all times of day or night, and Brian never once told me what to do or changed a word of what I'd finally written without asking. Every conversation we ever had—at least one for every story in these volumes—was a tennis match played with an equal partner, the only difference being that whenever the ball eventually stopped moving, we both felt like we'd won.



My first assignment was for FLASH SPECIAL #1. By 1990, THE FLASH had already long been a series about legacy and, if you'll forgive my stretch to link this analogy to running, about passing the baton. DC's original Scarlet Speedster had been a chemist named Jay Garrick. In the 1950s, the Flash mantle was passed on to a police forensics scientist named Barry Allen before finally being handed to Barry's nephew, Wally West.

Brian had sold his bosses on doing an extra-length one-shot containing a new story about each of the three Flashes—period pieces that needed some sort of connective tissue to unite the issue. Together with the other writers in the anthology, Brian and I came up with a tale about a centuries-spanning villain who, in different guises, had battled each speedster. From there, Brian and I invented a new, fourth Flash, one who lived in the far future and who ultimately defeated our foe using bits and pieces of the grand Flash legacy. I named him after the two great Flash writers of my youth, John Broome and Gardner Fox, and while I assumed when I was done that we'd never see him again, I was mistaken. (Look for John Fox again in future volumes.) John's initial outing, reprinted here, eventually ended up being my audition for the main Flash series... provided the book could outrace cancellation.

In 1990, the CBS network had launched a Flash TV series and, while it was widely embraced by comics fans, it lasted only a year. DC was disappointed, as the sales on the monthly comic lost whatever bump the show had given them. By the time writer William Messner-Loebs moved over to WONDER WOMAN, at least one executive editor had openly opined that the book should just be canceled. Augustyn, to his eternal credit, convinced the higher-ups to let the series play out a little while longer with his new writer...and together, Wally West and I were off to the races. In partnership with artist Greg LaRocque, whose electrifying work gave the Flash an energy that practically burst off the page, the whole team set to work.



Twenty-five years later, I still remember vividly the lunch conversation Brian and I had where we plotted out our first arc, a grand retelling of Wally's origins as first shown in 1959's THE FLASH #110. We stuck to the Hippocratic oath: "First, do no harm." As fans of the original material, we elected to leave as much of it standing as possible while updating the dialogue, simply filling in new details...but that barely took us through our first issue. After that, we got to create a whole new, heretofore unseen beginning for Wally out of whole cloth—and to do that, we dug deep, less into story than into emotion.

Flash comics of the 1950s and 1960s, as wonderful as they were, had almost always been about plot rather than character. Brian and I concentrated on exploration as much as adventure—on what it would have been like for Wally, as a kid, to be granted the power of super-speed and become his idol's protégé. Clearly, this new role would fulfill every wish young Wally ever had, and boy, could I relate. Initially, I'd struggled to find Wally's voice, but once I realized our commonality—we were both fans who grew up to be professionals in the one job we loved more than anything—it came naturally. Brian and I, in fact, often "joked" about how, rather than create a new voice for Wally, I just gave him mine and used Wally to work out my own personal issues. (That began right from the start: I based Iris West on my late

grandmother and Wally's relationship with Uncle Ira on my own difficulty connecting with my grandfather once he was widowed. Likewise, my lifelong fascination with stage magic made Abra Kadabra my number one go-to Flash villain, and at least half the conversations Wally ever had with his girlfriend, Linda Park, were lifted from real life, no matter how awkward they made me or Wally look. Never be afraid, young writers, to draw from personal experience.)

That's what Wally became to me: an alter ego, one who helped me stake out a career even as we both struggled against the tide of comics publishing. Superhero comics of the early 1990s had entered an era of grim, humorless violence, and that never interested me as a writer. Yes, absolutely, there's plenty of room for darker material in the genre, and some of the best comics I've ever read have been among the bleakest and most pessimistic; I just didn't (don't) have it in me as an author to go there. I didn't want to set the clock back to 1959, far from it. I wasn't, and never have considered myself to be, a retro act. I just wanted to tell modern stories about hope and optimism, about a young man struggling to hold himself to a set of heroic ideals inherited from a previous generation that were nearly impossible to adhere to in the late twentieth century. As such, the rest of comics publishing didn't really know what to make of what we were doing, but under Brian's guidance and protection, I was able to stay the course long enough to prove myself. So if you get to the end of this volume and decide you've enjoyed it, find Brian online, send him a nice note, and know that it's only a tiny fraction of the thanks he deserves from me and Wally for letting us run free.

Mark Waid
Los Angeles, 2016

DC

FLASH SPECIAL

1

1990

50TH ANNIVERSARY

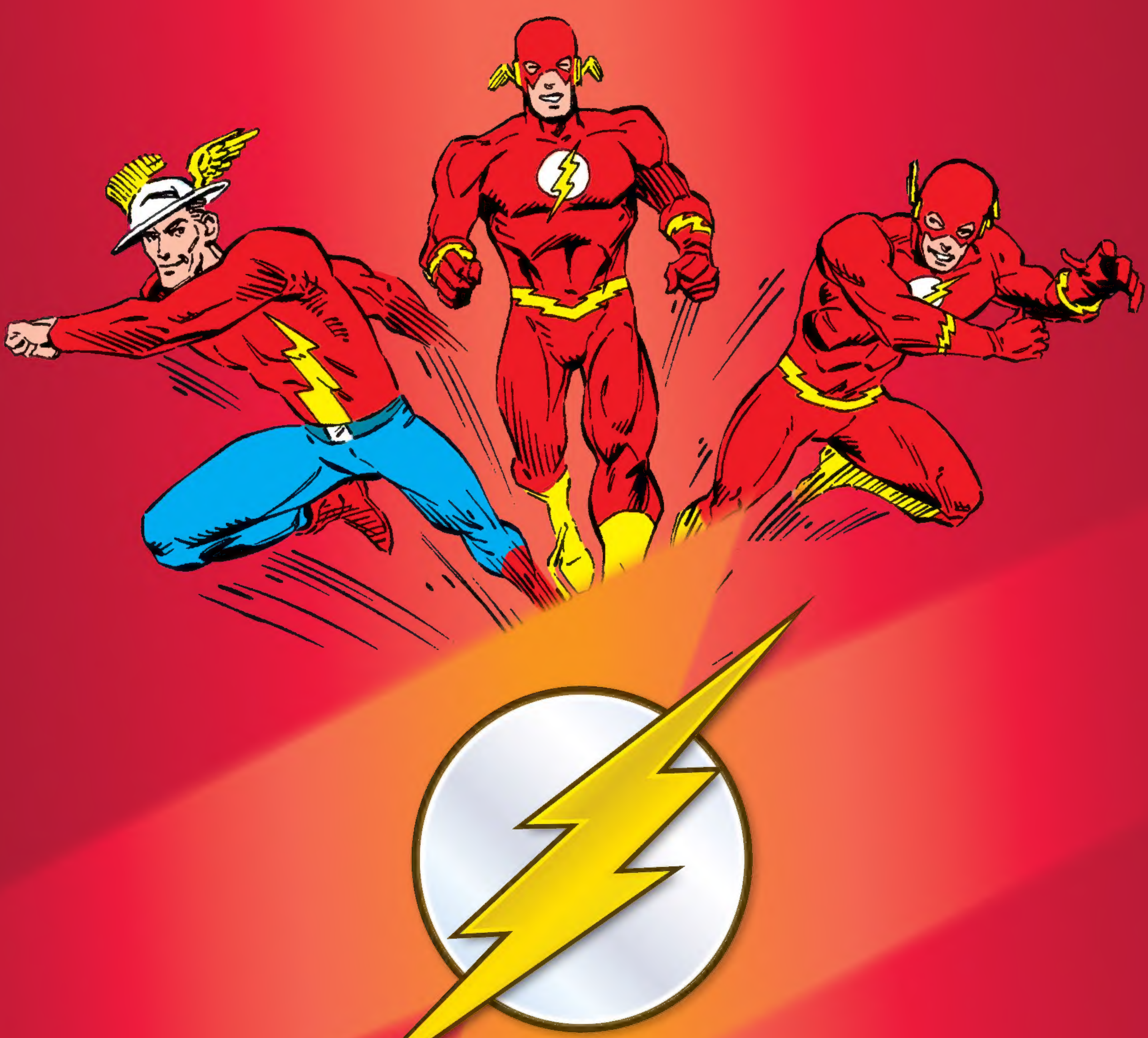
FLASH

S·P·E·C·I·A·L

AN 80 page GIANT celebrating the FASTEST MEN ALIVE!

JOE KUBERT 90

Cover by **Joe Kubert**



CENTRAL CITY. 2645 A.D.

... GOODBYE TO JOHN FOX, THE HISTORIAN DEEMED BEST SUITED FOR THIS MOMENTOUS TIMESKIP.- AND CENTRAL CITY'S FINAL HOPE. KIM FRYER, SPECTRUM NEWS, SIGNING OFF.

TIMESCAN VECTORED. PREPARE SUBJECT FOR DEPARTURE.

MINICAM DOWN.

KIND WORDS, DEAR... BUT NOT TO WORRY. EVERYTHING'S UNDER CONTROL. RIGHT, VIDAR?

SO LONG AS MYTRE AND I ARE CAREFUL ENOUGH ABOUT MONITORING THE TACHYON RADIATION THAT FUELS YOUR JOURNEY.

WE'VE VECTORED BACK 700 YEARS TO PINPOINT THE EXACT TIMESPOTS HE'S TO BE IN, VIDREP. FRYER. HE'LL HAVE ONE HOUR IN EACH TIMESPOT TO RECRUIT EACH FLASH AND BRING HIM BACK!

AND JOHN'S TO CONTACT FLASH-PRIME-- JAY GARRICK?

CORRECT. THEN, IN TURN, FLASHES II AND III. THEY HAVE TO KNOW ABOUT MOTA!

MYTRE! BEGIN TACHYON FLOW!

VECTOR INITIALIZED. RETROFLOW, PHASE YELLOW... PHASE RED.

VECTOR PRIMED! RETROFLOW POSITIVE!

GO!

GODSPEED, JOHN.

GENERATIONS

MARK WAID • MIKE PAROBECK • JOSE MARZAN JR.
WRITER PENCILLER INKER
GLENN WHITMORE • TIM HARKINS • BRIAN AUGUSTYN
COLORIST LETTERER EDITOR

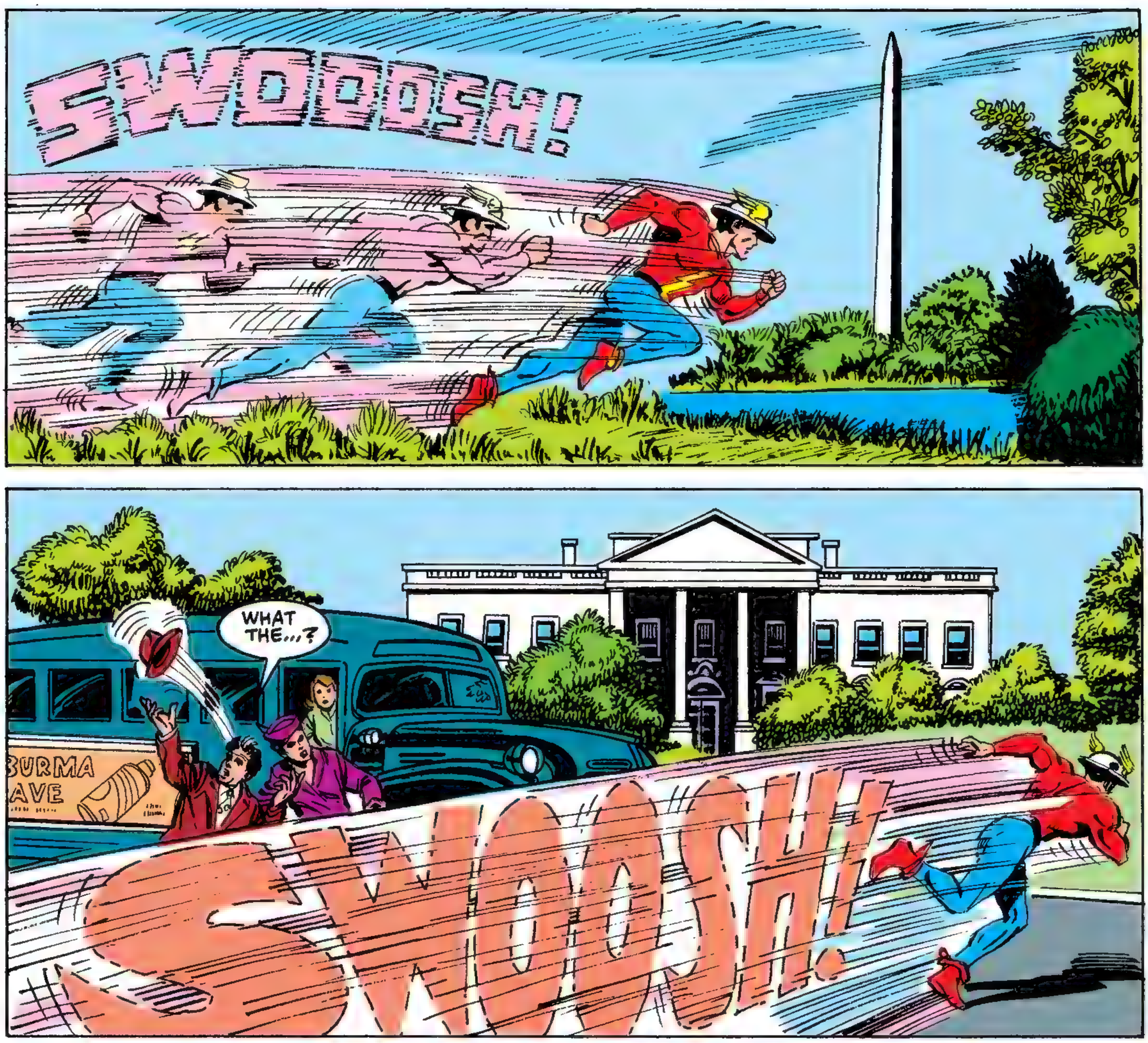
GODSPEED.

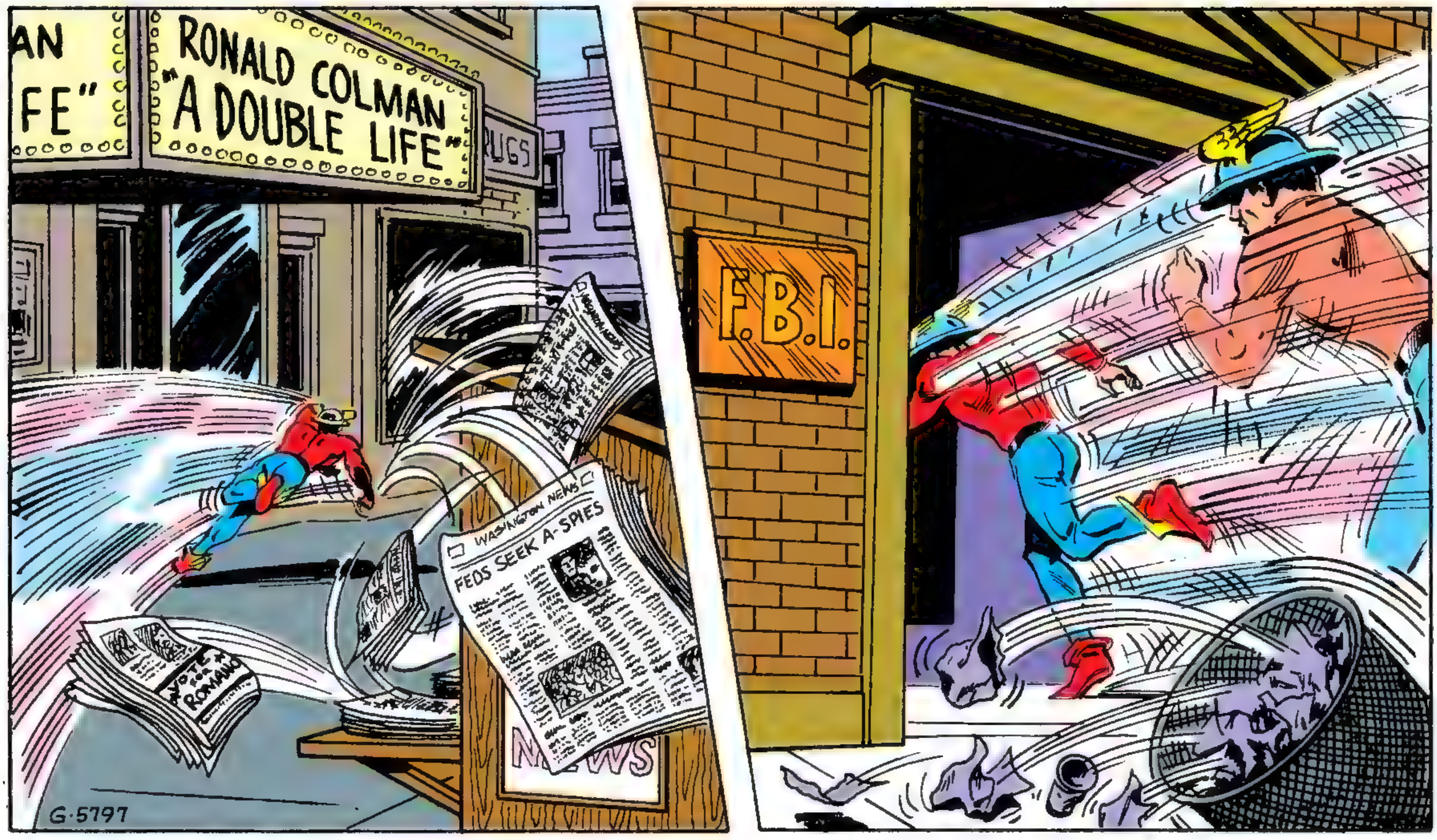
NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCE

THE END IS NEAR

GODSPEED INDEED. FOR ONLY BY LOOKING TO THE PAST CAN JOHN FOX HOPE TO SAVE THE FUTURE.

SEVEN HUNDRED YEARS PAST... TO BE EXACT.


SWOOSH!
WHAT THE...?
BURMA AVE
SWOOSH!


RONALD COLMAN "A DOUBLE LIFE"
WASHINGTON NEWS
FEDS SEEK A-SPIES
VOTE FOR ROMANO
F.B.I.
G-5797

The Flash®

YOU WANTED TO SEE ME, SIR?

WRITER:
LEN STRAZEWSKI
PENCILLER:
IRV NOVICK
INKER:
DICK GIORDANO
LETTER:
ALBERT DEGUZMAN
COLOR:
GLENN WHITMORE
EDITOR:
BRIAN AUGUSTYN

SOW The WIND!

DEDICATED TO THE GROUNDBREAKING WORK OF GARDNER FOX, E.E. HIBBARD, JOE KUBERT, LEE ELIAS AND SHELDON MAYER

FLASH! YOU SHOULD HAVE CALLED FROM THE TRAIN STATION. I WOULD HAVE SENT AN AGENT FOR YOU.

I DON'T USUALLY TAKE TRAINS, SIR! BESIDES, YOU ASKED THAT I KEEP THIS MEETING QUIET.

YES... -PUFF-... I ADMIT I'M NOT TOO COMFORTABLE WITH THE IDEA OF MYSTERY MEN... -PUFF- BUT YOUR *KIND* SERVED WELL IN THE WAR...

I WANT YOU TO WORK FOR ME... AS A *SPYCATCHER!*

WHAT!

THERE'S A *DISEASE* THREATENING THIS COUNTRY, FLASH. COMMUNISM IS KILLING US FROM *WITHIN!*

-COUGH-COUGH!- AMONG OTHER THINGS! I'M NOT VERY *POLITICAL*, SIR... I'M JUST A GUY THAT LIKES TO CATCH CROOKS!

THE ENEMY IS IN YOUR OWN KEYSTONE CITY, FLASH... AND YOU'RE THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN *STOP* HIM.

SOMEONE IS *STEALING* OUR COUNTRY'S DEFENSE SECRETS, FLASH. ALL OF THE LATEST ATOMIC WEAPONS TECHNOLOGY...

...AND WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE IT IS *ONE* OF THESE MEN.

JOHNNY CA
SHERMAN
JAY GARR
ELLIOT SHAPI
MANFRED MOTA
WILLIAM BR
JAMES FR
CHARLES
ALAN R
ROBE
DAVI

3

THIS CAN'T BE! THAT'S MY NAME! AND ELLIOT... MY OLD COLLEGE CHUM!

SURPRISED, FLASH? DON'T BE! THEY'RE ALL SUBVERSIVES. SHAPIRO IS ONE OF THOSE PACIFIST MARCHERS...

...MOTA WAS AN ARMY PSYCH CASE... AND THIS GARRICK...

...IS ONE OF THOSE PANIC-PEDDLING SCIENTISTS WHO WRITES ABOUT THE *DANGERS* OF ATOMIC POWER. FLASH, I WANT YOU TO USE YOUR POWERS TO FIND THE SPY AND *CATCH* HIM IN THE ACT.'

YOU MEAN YOU WANT ME... TO *SPY* ON THEM?!

IT'S FOR THE GOOD OF OUR COUNTRY, FLASH... AND WITH YOUR SPEED, YOU'LL BE THE BEST SPYCATCHER I'VE GOT.

I'LL DO WHAT I CAN TO HELP, SIR. BUT I WON'T USE MY SPEED TO SPY ON PEOPLE WHO MAY BE INNOCENT.

THE FLASH!

HMPH! ARMSTRONG? THE FLASH IS JUST LEAVING. HAVE HIM FOLLOWED!

I DON'T TRUST HIM!

FOLLOW HIM? HOW?

THE *NERVE* OF THAT GUY! AND TO THINK I USED TO LOOK UP TO HIM!

DING!

DING!

DING!

UH-OH! THAT *STALLED* CAR IS IN THE *WAY*!

5

DING! DING! DING!

DING! DING! DING!

WHEW! A GOOD THING I WAS AROUND. WHO'S GOT TIME TO PLAY SPIES WHEN THERE'S *REAL* WORK TO DO?

SPEAKING OF WORK, I'D BETTER CHECK IN AT THE LAB AND PICK UP MY SUIT. JOAN WILL HAVE A *FIT* IF I LEAVE ANOTHER OUTFIT IN THE OFFICE... AND I WON'T HAVE ANYTHING BUT THESE LONG JOHNS TO WEAR TOMORROW.

WELCOME TO KEYSTONE CITY
A COMMUNITY WITH ITS EYE ON THE FUTURE

6

AT LAST, THE FINAL COMPONENT FOR MY ATOM-SMASHING POWER PACK!

GARRICK LABS

YOU GOT THE MONEY, I GOT THE KNICK-KNACK, MR. MOTA.

THE GARRICK CONTAINMENT CAPACITOR... THE KEY TO CONTROLLED FISSION.

WHAT A WEIRDO! BUT HE'S GOT MONEY. A COUPLE MORE SWIPES LIKE THIS AND I CAN RETIRE TO BOLIVIA!

YESSS... THAT'S IT! JUST SLIDE IT in THAT SLOT, THEN CONNECT THE WIRE!

SURE, MR. MOTA. WHATEVER YOU SAY!

GARRICK LABS

YEOW!

I CAN FEEL THE POWER!

ZAP!

THE POWER OF ATOM SMASHER!

WHATEVER...

NOTHING CAN STOP ME NOW!

ELLIOT COULDN'T BE THE SPY... ALTHOUGH HE HAS ALWAYS BEEN A LITTLE LEFT OF CENTER.

BUT I *CAN'T* BELIEVE THAT ELLIOT *COULD* BE INVOLVED IN *ANY* WRONGDOING. HE'S ONE OF MY *OLDEST* FRIENDS... EH?

MR. GARRICK? IS THAT YOU?

SAM! STILL CLEANING UP?

YESSIR, BOSS! I DIDN'T KNOW YOU WERE WORKING LATE OR I WOULD'VE DONE YOUR OFFICE FIRST.

AND I WOULDN'T HAVE MET WITH THAT NUTBALL IN THE LABORATORY. *WHEW!*

I'LL LET YOU GET BACK TO WHATEVER YOU WERE DOING.

SURE, SAM. GOOD NIGHT!

AND GET THE *HECK* OUT OF HERE!

GARRICK LABS

WHAT A *WAD* OF CASH! MAYBE WE PAY OUR HELP A *LITTLE* TOO MUCH.

LOOKS LIKE SAM DROPPED ONE OF HIS GREENBACKS.

WAIT A SECOND! THIS BILL IS *GLOWING* LIKE A RADIUM WATCH! IS IT RADIOACTIVE?

IT'S HOT, ALL RIGHT! WHERE DID SAM GET THIS-- FROM AN *A-BOMB* TEST SITE?

CRACKLE!

CRACKLE!

CRACKLE!

HEY SAM!

CRACKLE!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT THIS STUFF IS, BUT IT'S PROBABLY WORTH *SOMETHING* TO *SOMEBODY*... AND THEN I CAN *BLOW* THIS BURG!

RADIATION LAB

SAM, YOU DROPPED THIS BILL... HEY! *WHAT* ARE YOU *DOING*?

WHO? MR. GARRICK... I WAS JUST, UH... AW, *NUTS*!

SAM

PUT 'EM UP, *BOSSMAN*!

WHY ARE YOU DOING THIS, SAM? ARE YOU SOME SORT OF *SPY*?

SPY, SHMY, YOU *DUMMY*! YOU THINK I *LIKE* WORKING FOR WHAT YOU PAY ME TO SWEEP UP?

I'M DOING IT FOR THE *MONEY*. SPEAKING OF BUCKS, PASS *THAT* GREENBACK OVER HERE!

NOW, WHILE HE'S NOT LOOKING AT ME...

SAM

WHAP!

UNNH. WHAT HIT ME?

WE'LL NEED THESE FOR EVIDENCE.

WHO WOULD'VE FIGURED SAM FOR A THIEF... OR A SPY? HE WAS JUST IN IT FOR THE MONEY, NOT THE POLITICS!

POLICE

A SHORT WHILE LATER...

I THINK I'VE GOT AN APOLOGY TO MAKE... TO AN OLD FRIEND.

GARRICK LABS

BUBS DINER

TUNK TUNK

JAY GARRICK! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN HERE SINCE YOU GOT MARRIED. IS JOAN TAKING A NIGHT OFF FROM THE KITCHEN?

NO, ELLIOT. I CAME JUST TO SEE YOU.

WE'VE BEEN FRIENDS EVER SINCE THE DAY YOU DRAGGED ME FROM THE HARD WATER LAB AFTER THE ACCIDENT. YOU HELPED ME WITH THE ... THE...

THE SPEED? I KNOW, BUT I WOULD HAVE DONE IT FOR ANYONE, JAY. YOU DON'T OWE ME ANYTHING.

YOU JUST HAVE A DUTY TO THE WORLD TO USE YOUR POWERS FOR THE RIGHT REASONS!

10

I OWE YOU MY TRUST, ELLIOT. WHEN SOMEONE TOLD ME YOU WERE A SPY, I WAS READY TO *BELIEVE* IT. I SHOULD HAVE JAMMED HIS WORDS DOWN HIS THROAT--BUT I *DIDN'T*!

A *SPY*? I'M NOT SURPRISED. I'VE HAD *FBI* AGENTS DOGGING MY HEELS EVER SINCE I QUIT THE MANHATTAN PROJECT... A LOT OF US WHO *WON'T* WORK ON WEAPONS HAVE.

BANK OF COMMERCE

ELLIOT, DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE NAMED MOTA... MANFRED MOTA?

NOW, *THERE'S* SOMEONE WHO SHOULD'VE WORKED ON THE BOMB! I'VE MET MOTA. HE'S NOT MUCH ON THEORY...

COMMERCE

...BUT HE LOVES TO *BLOW* THINGS UP!

KAAABLAMM!

SPEAKING OF *DUTY*, ELLIOT...

THESE LOOK A LITTLE *HEAVY* FOR YOU, FELLA!

CRUNCH

OW!

GIVE IT UP, PAL!

FLASH, HE'S *MOTA*. HE'S THE GUY YOU ASKED ABOUT!

NICE PUNCH, FLASH, BUT MY *ATOMIC-PUNCH* IS STRONGER!

KA-BOOOOM!

MUST DODGE... UNNHHH!

12

UNHHHH... WHERE AM I? WHO...?

IT'S ME, JAY. IT'S ELLIOT.

ELLIOT! WHAT HAPPENED? WAIT... I REMEMBER... THAT ATOM SMASHER GUY...

HE'S STILL OUT THERE!

LIE STILL, JAY. YOU'VE HAD A BAD KNOCK ON THE HEAD.

ER... NICE PLACE YOU'VE GOT, ELLIOT.

IT'S ALL I CAN AFFORD ON MY LIBRARY PAYCHECK.

IF IT WASN'T FOR YOUR HELMET, YOU'D BE A GONER!

OOOOOH. YEAH, I GUESS YOU'RE RIGHT.

LIBRARY? ELLIOT, YOU'RE A TOP THEORETICAL PHYSICIST! WHY ARE YOU WORKING IN A LIBRARY?

AT LEAST IN THE LIBRARY, I CAN KEEP UP WITH MY READING.

WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME, ELLIOT? WE'RE FRIENDS. I WOULD'VE HIRED...

JAY, HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN? I'M ONE OF THOSE "PINKOS" YOU READ ABOUT WHO DON'T BELIEVE IN WAR. THERE'S NOT MUCH OF A JOB MARKET FOR PACIFISTS THESE DAYS.

13

YOU'D JUST GET INTO TROUBLE WITH THE GOVERNMENT.

NEWS FLASH! METRO POLICE ARE IN A SHOOT-OUT WITH AN ARMORED BANK ROBBER ON FILLMORE AVENUE NW. AVOID THE AREA!

ARMORED ROBBER? THAT SOUNDS LIKE ATOM SMASHER AGAIN! WE'LL FINISH THIS TALK LATER, ELLIOT! BUT WE WILL FINISH IT!

JAY, WAIT!

HE'S IN NO CONDITION FOR A FIGHT! HE MAY HAVE A CONCUSSION!

ONAL BANK OF

STILL A LITTLE DIZZY! GOT TO PULL MYSELF TOGETHER!

FOOLS! BULLETS CAN'T HURT ATOM SMASHER, THE ATOMIC OUTLAW!

HEY, FLASH! GET THAT GIRL OUT OF THE WAY!

DON'T WORRY, MISS. I'VE GOT YOU!

FLASH? I THOUGHT I ALREADY TOOK CARE OF YOU!

OOOOOOH!

14

KEEP THE CHANGE AND GET *OUT* OF HERE!

I'M *HERE*! RIGHT WHERE THE RECORDS SAY FLASH WILL BEAT THE ATOM SMASHER!

TAXI

I'VE GOT TO *TALK* TO HIM... GET HIM TO COME *BACK* WITH ME!

WHAT *DESTRUCTION*! IS *THIS* WHAT WE WANT FROM ATOMIC POWER?!

NOW FLASH...

DIE!

KAPOW!

UNHHH!

TUNK!

MY GOD! THIS HAS GOT TO STOP!

...HIT MY VEST CHRONOMETER!

LET'S SEE IF YOU CAN OUTRUN THIS ATOMIC PUNCH, FLASH!

NO... NO MORE!

THE AUTOMATIC RECALL IS STARTING! TOO SOON!

FLAAAAASSSHHHHHHH!

YOW!

WHAT! MY POWER PACK!

NOOOOOOOO...

LOOKS LIKE YOU CAN'T BLOW UP WHAT YOU CAN'T TOUCH, BIG, RED AND UGLY!

WHIZZZ

16

SOME PACIFIST YOU ARE, ELLIOT!

POLICE

AS EINSTEIN SAYS... IT'S ALL RELATIVE!

KEYSTONE AMBULANCE

I'LL *GET* YOU FOR THIS, FLASH. IF IT TAKES A *THOUSAND* YEARS!

WHAT'S THE SCOOP, SPEEDSTER? WAS HE SOME SORTA *COMMIE* SPY?

SPY? NO, I THINK HE WAS JUST A GUY WHO LIKED TO *BLOW* THINGS UP.

PRESS

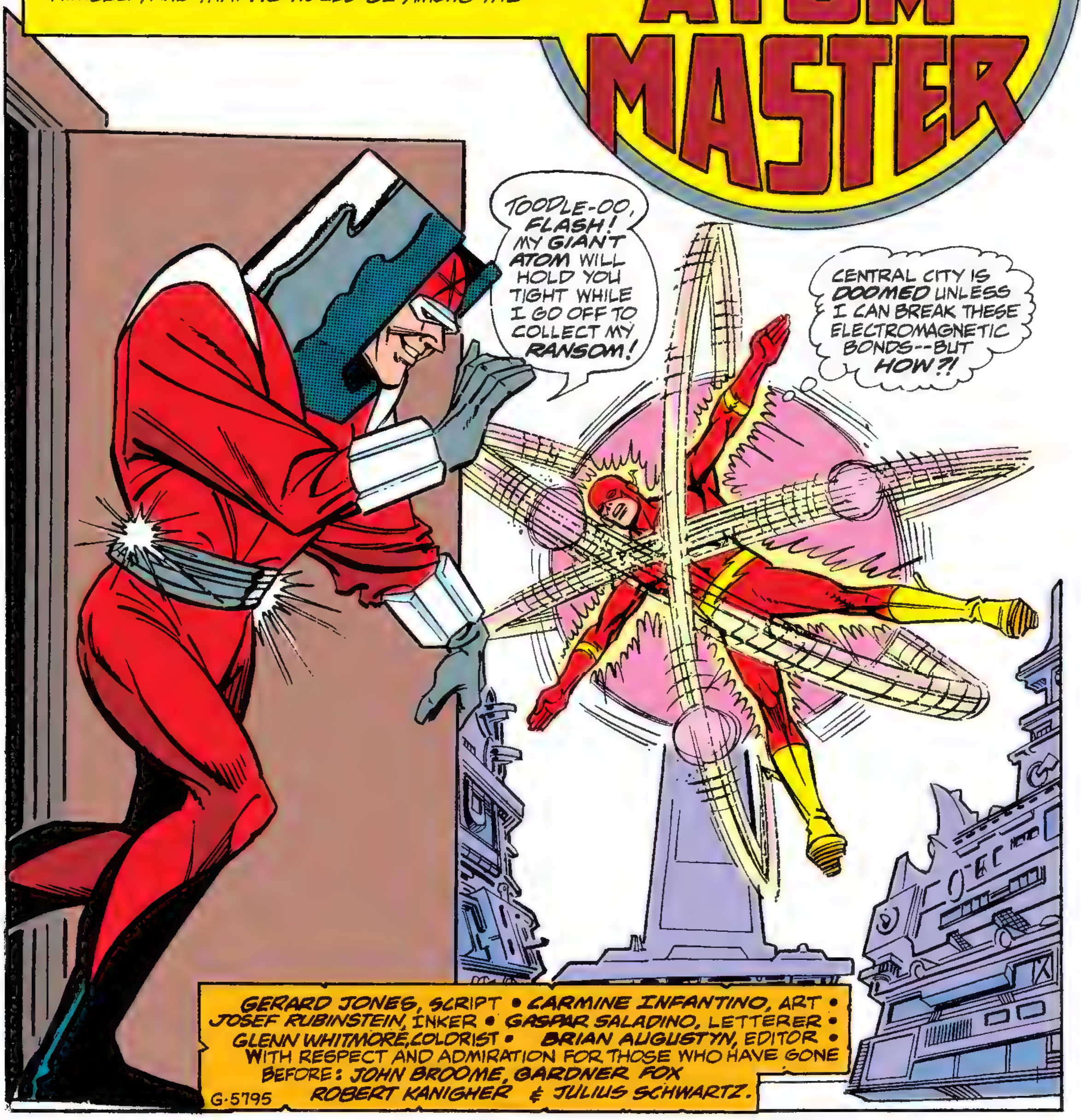
NOW, FOLLOW JOHN FOX INTO THE NEXT ERA OF THE FLASH, AS HE ATTEMPTS TO MEET BARRY ALLEN!

The FLASH®

CAPTIVES OF THE ATOM MASTER

WHEN PROFESSOR FALLOUT TOOK CENTRAL CITY HOSTAGE WITH A NEUTRON BOMB, THE WORLD'S FASTEST HUMAN EXPECTED A SUPER-QUICK VICTORY!

LITTLE DID HE KNOW THAT HIS ATOMIC ANTAGONIST HAD BEEN PLANNING REVENGE AGAINST FLASH HIMSELF, AND THAT HE WOULD BE AMONG THE



GERARD JONES, SCRIPT • CARMINE INFANTINO, ART • JOSEF RUBINSTEIN, INKER • GASPAR SALADINO, LETTERER • GLENN WHITMORE, COLORIST • BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITOR • WITH RESPECT AND ADMIRATION FOR THOSE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE: JOHN BROOME, GARDNER FOX ROBERT KANIGHER & JULIUS SCHWARTZ.

G-5795

IN THE PRIVATE LABORATORY OF THE SCARLET SPEEDSTER...

MY COSMIC TREADMILL IS NEARLY PERFECTED--SOON I'LL BE ABLE TO TRAVEL IN TIME BY USE OF SUPER-SPEED! BUT I STILL HAVE ONE BUG TO WORK OUT...

THE POSITIVE RADIATION WHICH SENDS ME INTO THE FUTURE CAUSES AN ELECTRO-MAGNETIC REACTION IN MY BODY!

THESE INSTRUMENTS SHOW THAT I'M STILL CHARGED WITH POSITIVE IONS!

I'VE BEEN WORKING AT THIS SINCE EIGHT THIS MORNING AND NOW IT'S...

THAT'S ODD. MY WATCH READ THE SAME LAST TIME I CHECKED IT, AND THAT WAS--

GOOD GOSH! SOMEHOW THE ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD MUST HAVE STOPPED IT! THIS COULD BE A DISASTER...

...BECAUSE, AS BARRY ALLEN, I'VE GOT A LUNCH-DATE WITH IRIS WEST!

BUT FLASH ISN'T THE ONLY ONE INTERESTED IN RADIATION...

PERFECT! I'VE DUPLICATED THE MILITARY'S TOP-SECRET NEW NEUTRON BOMB!

OH, THOSE INGENIOUS DEVILS IN THE DEFENSE INDUSTRY! DURING MY YEARS IN PRISON THEY REFINED NUCLEAR WEAPONRY TO THE POINT...

...THAT THIS BOMB WILL FLOOD INHABITED AREAS WITH LETHAL RADIATION, WHILE LEAVING BUILDINGS UNDAMAGED!

"IT'S THE PERFECT WEAPON FOR A TOTAL INVASION--AND FOR MY OWN BRILLIANT SCHEME!

"OF COURSE, I WASN'T WASTING MY PRISON YEARS EITHER..."

JUST A FEW MORE MONTHS AND THIS ELECTROMAGNETIC STRUCTURE IN THE SHAPE OF A GIANT ATOM WILL BE READY FOR USE!

THAT HAD BETTER NOT BE AN ESCAPE-DEVICE, MOTA!

BUT I WASN'T FOOL ENOUGH TO RISK AN ESCAPE! I COUNTED THE YEARS UNTIL I'D BE FREE TO PAY BACK MY NEMESIS--THE FLASH!

HE DISAPPEARED FOR YEARS, ONLY TO RESURFACE IN CENTRAL CITY--WITH A BETTER COSTUME!

PICTURE NEWS

FLASH CAPTURES CAPTAIN BOOMERANG

YANKS WALLOP CHISOX

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WELL, THE FORMER ATOM SMASHER-- SOON TO BE KNOWN AS PROFESSOR FALLOUT-- HAS LEARNED SOME THINGS ABOUT COSTUMES HIMSELF! NOT TO MENTION NUCLEAR POWER!

AS FLASH--AND ALL OF CENTRAL CITY--IS ABOUT TO DISCOVER!

BUT FLASH IS MORE CONCERNED WITH ANOTHER DISCOVERY...

NAMELY, THAT HIS GIRLFRIEND, PRETTY REPORTER IRIS WEST, HAS BEEN WAITING IMPATIENTLY FOR HER LUNCH-DATE...

HONESTLY, BARRY. IF I DIDN'T KNOW HOW UNAMBITIOUS YOU ARE, I'D SWEAR YOU WERE IN TRAINING TO BE THE WORLD'S SLOWEST HUMAN!

UH-OH! LOOKS LIKE MY FAVORITE NEWSHEN IS AS MAD AS A WET NEWSHEN AGAIN!

I'D BETTER BE THE PERFECT GENTLEMAN TODAY.

I CAN EXPLAIN, IRIS...

YOU SEE, I WAS DOING SOME FORENSIC LAB WORK AND--

OUCH!

FUMP!

WHAT--?!

BUT HONESTLY, IRIS-- I WAS ABOUT TO *PUSH* THE DOOR *IN* WHEN IT SUDDENLY--

YOW!

TANG

REALLY, BARRY, IF YOU THINK THESE LITTLE-BOY *TRICKS* WILL TAKE MY MIND OFF--

YOU'VE GOT TO BELIEVE ME, IRIS! I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT'S CAUSING THIS!

GREAT THUNDER! OF COURSE! THE *POSITIVE IONS* IN MY BODY HAVE TURNED ME INTO A *LIVING MAGNET!* NO WONDER MY WATCH STOPPED!

YOU'LL HAVE TO EXCUSE ME, IRIS. MY--*er*--LAB WORK TODAY SEEMS TO HAVE MADE ME *MAGNETIC*.

MMMMM-- I'D CALL YOU MANY THINGS, BARRY ALLEN, BUT *MAGNETIC* ISN'T ONE OF THEM!

A MOMENT LATER, HIDDEN FROM PRYING EYES...

BY VIBRATING MY MOLECULES I SHOULD BE ABLE TO AMPLIFY THE IONIC ACTIVITY AND **EXPEL** THE POSITIVE CHARGE.

THEN, A TELLTALE SPURT OF RED...

BUT TO BE SURE, I'D BETTER DO IT IN MY **LAB!** AS **FLASH** I CAN SPEED THERE, DEMAGNETIZE MYSELF...

...AND, WITH LUCK, BE BACK BEFORE I'VE GOTTEN EVEN FURTHER ONTO IRIS'S **BAD SIDE!**

VIBRATING THROUGH THE RESTAURANT WALL, **FLASH** EXPECTS TO ENTER A QUIET SIDE-STREET, BUT...

WHAT--? PEOPLE RUNNING...

THE LAST THING I NEED RIGHT NOW IS A DELAY! BUT I'D BETTER SEE...

GREAT SCOTT! IT'S **INCREDIBLE--**

NOW HEAR THIS, **CENTRAL CITIZENS**: IN THE NUCLEUS OF THIS **GIANT "ATOM"** LIES A **NEUTRON BOMB!**

DON'T THINK YOU CAN MOVE IT OR DEFUSE IT! **NOTHING** CAN PENE-TRATE THE ELECTRO-MAGNETIC FIELD OF MY ATOM! NOTHING BUT THE DEADLY NEUTRONS--AND ME--**PROFESSOR FALLOUT!**

UNLESS ALL THE **CASH** IN CENTRAL CITY'S **BANKS** IS DELIVERED TO ME HERE WITHIN **ONE HOUR**-- I WILL DETONATE THE BOMB AND RENDER THIS CITY UNIN-HABITABLE!

ONE HOUR! IT'S **INSANE!**

BUT WHAT CHOICE DO WE HAVE?

AN HOUR IS **ALL** I HAVE IN THIS TIME-PERIOD! THIS **HAS** TO BE THE MOMENT I WANT. BUT WHERE'S...

...THE FLASH!

HE'LL SAVE US!

WELL, WELL! HOW LOVELY TO SEE YOU AGAIN, FLASH!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU MEAN BY "AGAIN"! BUT I'M GOING TO MAKE SURE THAT THIS IS THE *FIRST* AND *LAST* TIME YOU TRY A STUNT LIKE THIS!

FRRZZZ

TINY ELECTRICAL EXPLOSIONS-- THROUGHOUT MY BODY--CAN'T STAND IT-- BLACKING OUT--

WELCOME TO THE *ATOMIC ERA*, CITIZENS! HA HA! YOUR DEADLINE IS ONLY 58 MINUTES AWAY! DON'T MISS IT!

THERE'S NO WAY I CAN KEEP UP WITH THEM! I CAN ONLY HOPE FLASH ESCAPES SOMEHOW-- FOR THE SAKE OF *HIS* ERA... AND *MINE*!

IN THE MAYOR'S OFFICE, AS THE HOUR TICKS BY...

IT'S PIRACY! IT'S NUCLEAR TERRORISM!

NO QUESTION--BUT WE CAN'T AFFORD TO STAND ON PRINCIPLE AT A TIME LIKE THIS!

OUR FINEST SCIENTISTS ADMIT THEY'RE STYMIED BY THAT GIANT ATOM!

AND SO, IN BANKS THROUGHOUT CENTRAL CITY...

I ONLY HOPE OUR FEDERAL BANK INSURANCE COVERS THIS!

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PROFESSOR FALLOUT... IF YOU ARE LISTENING... CENTRAL CITY ADMITS DEFEAT. PLEASE REMOVE YOUR NEUTRON BOMB AND ACCEPT YOUR RANSOM...

...THERE IS NOTHING ELSE WE CAN DO!

HA HA! I'VE ALWAYS SAID THAT NUCLEAR SCIENCE WOULD ADVANCE FASTER THAN MANKIND'S ABILITY TO CONTROL IT!

YOU COST ME MANY YEARS OF MY LIFE, FLASH! I WANT YOU TO LIVE LONG ENOUGH TO SEE MY **BIG SURPRISE!**

AND THERE'S NOTHING YOU CAN DO EITHER, **FLASH!** THAT SMALLER SIMULATED ATOM HOLDS YOU **IN** JUST AS SURELY AS MY LARGE MODEL HOLDS EVERYONE **OUT!**

BUT DON'T WORRY! THE PROTONIC FORCE OF THE NUCLEUS WON'T HARM YOU!

WELL, I'M OFF TO COLLECT MY MONEY! IF MY **REAL ESTATE BROKER** CALLS, TELL HIM I'LL BE RIGHT BACK! **HA HA HA!**

"SURPRISE"? "REAL ESTATE"?

GREAT GUNS! HE ISN'T GOING TO SHUT DOWN HIS NEUTRON BOMB AT ALL!

"HE'LL SET IT OFF, KILLING THOUSANDS--THEN SECRETLY USE HIS RANSOM MONEY TO BUY UP THE REAL ESTATE IN THE CONTAMINATED AREA!"

"THEN, WHEN HIS HOLDINGS ARE FINALLY DECONTAMINATED, HE'LL RESELL THEM AND MAKE AN INCREDIBLE FORTUNE--AS A POST-HOLOCAUST LAND SWINDLER!"

MUST GET OUT OF HERE, BUT...THERE'S NO POWER IN THE UNIVERSE GREATER THAN THAT OF THE ATOM!

WITHIN MINUTES PROFESSOR FALLOUT WILL BE...

WAIT. THAT CLOCK REMINDS ME... OF THE MAGNETISM THAT STOPPED MY WATCH EARLIER!

IN MAGNETISM, OPPOSITES *ATTRACT* AND LIKES *REPEL*. IF THE ELECTROMAGNETIC "*PROTONS*" OF THIS GIANT ATOM HAVE *POSITIVE* CHARGES LIKE REAL PROTONS...

...AND IF I CAN VIBRATE MY MOLECULES ENOUGH TO AMPLIFY THE *POSITIVE IONS* WITH WHICH MY BODY IS CHARGED...

...THIS NUCLEUS WILL *REPEL* ME!

SO FAR SO GOOD! BUT NOW MY BODY IS *ATTRACTED* TO THESE NEGATIVELY-CHARGED *ELECTRONS*! I'LL BE *TRAPPED* IN THEIR ORBIT FOREVER...

...UNLESS I CAN VIBRATE SO INTENSELY THAT I EXPEL MILLIONS-- *UGH*--OF MY BODY'S *NATURAL* PROTONS!

THEN I MAY-- *Uhh*-- LEAVE MY BODY WITH A *NEGATIVE* CHARGE!

THE STRAIN...TEARING MY ATOMIC STRUCTURE APART...BUT HAVE TO... KEEP...

OHHHH...

SURE ENOUGH, THE SULTAN OF SPEED IS HURLED FROM THE ATOM...

BUT WAIT! HIS BATTERED FORM LIES LIMP-- UNMOVING-- AS PRECIOUS SECONDS TICK AWAY...

THANK YOU, MR. MAYOR. I'M PLEASED TO SEE THAT YOU'RE A SENSIBLE MAN.

NOW THAT I'VE GOT MY CASH, AND MY RADIATION-PROOF SUIT, I CAN SHARE MY LITTLE SURPRISE WITH YOU...

THERE! I'VE TRIGGERED THE REACTION! MY NEUTRON BOMB WILL DESTROY YOU ALL...

...BEFORE YOU EVEN HAVE A CHANCE TO RUN!

BUT SUDDENLY...

FLASH!

YOU'RE TOO LATE, FLASH! YOU CAN NEVER REACH THAT BOMB IN TIME!

NOT UNLESS I WHIRL MY BODY AROUND IT LIKE THE ELECTRICAL FIELD OF A SYNCHROCYCLOTRON...

...AND HARMLESSLY DISPERSE THESE "ATOMIC" PARTICLES!

EDITOR'S NOTE: A SYNCHROCYCLOTRON IS A PARTICLE ACCELERATOR WHICH ISOLATES PROTONS THROUGH A FREQUENCY MATCHING THE ANGULAR VELOCITY OF THE PARTICLES!

NOW IT'S A SIMPLE MATTER TO DEFUSE THE BOMB AND...

BLAST YOU, FLASH--

NO, BLAST YOU, PROFESSOR FALLOUT...

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MY BODY IS STILL EMANATING EXCESS ELECTRONS, WHICH ARE OVERWHELMING YOUR POSITRON STREAM, CAUSING IT TO ANNIHILATE ITSELF!

AGH!

AND THIS WILL ANNIHILATE YOU!

WHAM

SO...YOU'VE BEATEN ME TWICE, FLASH... BUT I'LL GET YOU... I'LL GET YOU...

THERE HE GOES AGAIN-- "TWICE"! I ONLY HOPE HE GETS PLENTY OF ATTENTION FROM THE PRISON PSYCHIATRIST!

WE'RE IN YOUR DEBT, FLASH! AS ALWAYS!

BROOME FOX TKC

NO NEED TO TELL HIM THAT I ALMOST DIDN'T MAKE IT IN TIME. FORTUNATELY MY BRIEF "FAINTING SPELL" PASSED WHEN MY BODY BEGAN SHEDDING THOSE EXCESS ELECTRONS!

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I MUST REACH HIM! MY TIME IS ALMOST UP... THIS IS MY ONLY CHANCE!

NOW, LET'S HOPE WE'VE ALL LEARNED A LESSON IN *NUCLEAR SAFETY!*

FLASH! FLASH! I MUST TALK TO YOU!

THE EARTH'S FUTURE... DEPENDS... ON... IT...

WHAT WAS THAT?

THAT'S PECULIAR. I'D HAVE SWORN I HEARD SOMETHING ABOUT THE EARTH'S FUTURE.

WELL, IF IT'S IMPORTANT, I'M SURE I'LL HEAR ABOUT IT AGAIN.

RIGHT NOW, I'D BETTER HURRY-- MY *ROMANTIC FUTURE* DEPENDS ON THAT!

BUT NANO-SECONDS LATER WHEN BARRY ALLEN RETURNS TO THE RESTAURANT...

uh-oh...

SHE LEFT! NOW I'M REALLY IN DUTCH WITH--

OH, BARRY!

I'M SO SORRY TO LEAVE YOU WAITING HERE FOR ME! BUT WHEN I HEARD ABOUT THAT NEUTRON BOMB I HAD TO RUSH OUT AND COVER THE STORY FOR PICTURE NEWS!

OH, THAT'S OKAY.

I'VE--er--KEPT YOU WAITING OFTEN ENOUGH.

THANK YOU, BARRY. I WISH I COULD BE AS UNDERSTANDING AS YOU.

BY THE WAY, WHAT IS THIS ABOUT A "NEUTRON BOMB"? I WAS IN THE MEN'S ROOM, GETTING RID OF THAT MAGNETISM I BUILT UP!

GETTING RID OF YOUR MAGNETISM? NOT FOR ME YOU HAVEN'T, BARRY ALLEN!

THE EXCITEMENT CONTINUES--
TURN TO CHAPTER THREE ON THE NEXT PAGE FOLLOWING.

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"MY NAME IS WALLY WEST AND BECAUSE I HAVE META-HUMAN POWERS EVERYBODY FIGURES I DON'T HAVE TO TRAIN. THAT'S WRONG."

"JUST BECAUSE I CAN RUN FAST, DOESN'T MEAN I DON'T NEED MUSCLE TO HAUL THINGS AROUND. WHEN I GO INTO ACTION AS THE FLASH, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN. I HAVE TO BE PREPARED."

BBRR!!NNNGG...

HELLO? YES, I'M WALLY WEST,,, WHO,,,? DUFF'S HOUSE OF SNEAKERS,,,?

I DON'T,,, OH. OH, I SEE FORTY PAIRS TWO YEARS AGO,,,? THAT MUCH?

FOR INSTANCE, I'M PREPARED TO GET RID OF CREDITORS.

WELL, SEE, I WAS A LOT RICHER THEN. I RAN INTO A LITTLE DIFFICULTY,,, I SEE. A COLLECTION AGENCY?

THAT ISN'T NECESSARY. HONEST. BENJAMIN HARRISON HUGHES IS HANDLING MY FINANCIAL AFFAIRS. I CAN GIVE YOU HIS,,,

MASONS U-FIX-IT

YOU'VE ALREADY SENT SOMEONE? OH, BROTHER,,,

LOOK, YOU CAN CALL JLA HEADQUARTERS. THEY'LL VOUCH,,, HELLO? HELLO?

NOK! NOK! NOK! NOK!

G·5786

OH, BROTHER! COME IN IF YOU WANT, BUT I CAN'T...

SCRASH FLASH®

SAVE ME! YOU'VE GOTTA SAVE ME! HE'S CRAZY! NUTS! HE'S RADIOACTIVE!!

"I DON'T THINK SHE'S FROM DUFF'S WORLD OF SNEAKERS."

WITH A TIP OF THE WINGED COWL TO MIKE BARON, JACKSON GUICE & MIKE GOLD-- WHO MADE IT ALL HAPPEN AGAIN!

CON-FUSION!

REACTION--WILLIAM MESSNER-LOEBS
CORE--GRANT MIEHM & TIM DZON * MELTDOWN--GLENN WHITMORE
ACCELERATION--ALBERT DE GUZMAN * CONTAINMENT--BRIAN AUGUSTYN

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HE'S GONE MAD, I TELL YOU! *CRAZY!* HE'S GONNA *KILL* ME!

I HAVEN'T BEEN A *GOOD* WOMAN, HEAVEN KNOWS. I MADE MY SHARE O' MISTAKES. LOTS OF 'EM!

BUT I DON'T DESERVE THIS! NOBODY DOES!

BUT IF YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ME, THINK ABOUT THE FOLKS IN THE *CITY!* ALL THE LITTLE KIDS AND KITTIES, THEY'RE *INNOCENT!*

DON'T YOU WANTA *SAVE* THEM?

SURE, YOU SAY, "WHY SHOULD I RISK ALMOST *CERTAIN DEATH* TO FIGHT A GUY WHO'S A LIVING *SUN!*?

WELL, YOU'RE A *HERO*, RIGHT? SHOW SOME *BACKBONE!*

BESIDES, I GOT *MONEY*. A LOT! DON'T THINK I DON'T! IF YOU WANT MONEY, YOU'LL GET PLENTY!

OR I COULD BRIBE YOU WITH MY *BODY...!*

LADY, WAIT A SECOND. THERE'S A *PROBLEM*, RIGHT?

SUPPOSE YOU TELL ME YOUR *NAME*, OKAY?

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"MY NAME? MY NAME'S NADINE CALHOON. I'M... UM... FRIENDS WITH MANFRED MOTA... HE'S A PROFESSOR. ALSO HE WAS PROF FALLOUT, THE GUY THE FLASH FOUGHT. THE LAST FLASH, I MEAN. NOT YOU."

"ANYWAY, HE SPENT THE LAST THIRTY YEARS IN THE JOINT TRYIN' TO PERFECT HIS NUCLEAR POWERS AND ESCAPE."

"HE REALLY DOESN'T LIKE THE FLASH."

KILL 'IM... HEH, HEH... HUMILIATE HIM, TOO. YEAH, THAT'S THE TICKET!

"FINALLY HIS RESEARCH WAS COMPLETED..."

IT WORKS! BUT I NEED POWER! MORE POWER!!

"NEXT HE WENT TO ELYSIAN FIELDS POWER LABS."

"AND HE TOOK A LOT OF STUFF... IMPORTANT STUFF, I GUESS."

NOW, AT LAST, I'LL HAVE ENOUGH POWER!

"HE CALLED HIS OLD GANG TOGETHER, BUT CHUCK AND ROGER WERE ALL THAT SHOWED UP. AND ME, OF COURSE."

WELL, WHAT D'YOU THINK, GUYS? IT FITS... IT GENERATES ENOUGH *POWER* TO *LIFT* CENTRAL CITY 12 FEET IN THE AIR AND IT'S *SAFE*, *COMPLETELY SAFE!*

THAT'S... GREAT, BOSS.

SWELL.

I'LL CUT THROUGH CENTRAL CITY LIKE A BLOW TORCH THROUGH *FLY PAPER!* AND THE BEST PART IS THE *FLASH* WILL BE HUMILIATED AND *DESTROYED!*

BUT BOSS, HOW IS ANY OF THAT GONNA MAKE US ANY *MONEY?*

MONEY?

FRASSCCHHH

MONEY! I'LL GIVE YOU "*MONEY*"! TASTE THE NUCLEAR FURY OF *FUSIONN!*

I BURN THEM WITH MY *POWER*, THEN I *FEED* UPON THE *NUCLEAR REACTIONS* I ENGENDER! I AM THE LIVING *ENERGY LOOP!* I AM *EVERYTHING!* AND TOTALLY *SAFE!*

"IT WAS THEN I REALIZED MY SWEETHEART MIGHT BE A LITTLE WACKY."

WACKY. YEAH, THAT COVERS IT. WHERE IS HE NOW?

I DON'T KNOW HE SAID HE WAS GOING TO DESTROY THE WORLD OF THE FLASH... LURE YOU OUTA HIDING.

HE COULD'VE JUST SENT ME A POSTCARD...

WAIT A SECOND! "WORLD..."

CENTRAL CITY! ALL THE OLD TIMERS WHO HATE BARRY *FIXATE* ON THAT PLACE!

COME ON, NADINE, WE'RE...

"...GOING PLACES!"

I HOPE THIS IS THE PLACE... IF I CAN ONLY CONVINCE HIM...

AMAZING THAT THEY WOULD USE SOMETHING AS RARE AND VALUABLE AS *WOOD* TO BUILD THEIR HOUSES!

MR. WEST, ISN'T IT? I'VE COME TO ASK YOU...

OH, NO!

LOOK, PAL... UM... I KNOW WHY YOU'RE HERE.

YOU DO?

YEAH, BUT THERE'S THIS NUTSO ABOUT TO BURN DOWN THE CITY, SO LEAVE THE BILL AND I'LL PAY FOR THE SHOES WHEN I CAN! 'KAY? GREAT. SEE YA...

SHOES...?!

6

"THE LIGHT FLASHES BY LIKE A SPINNING WHEEL. A WHEEL OF TIME. ANOTHER OF BARRY'S OLD, PATHETIC VILLAINS COME TO CONQUER THE WORLD."

"I FIGURE TO TAKE THIS GUY WITH ONE HAND..."

"...BEHIND MY BACK."

SO MUCH RAW POWER... BETTER GET TO COVER.

ENTRAL CITY

WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE HE...

...IS...

FRRA

SCHH

MY AURA... MUST... HAVE ABSORBED MOST... OF THE ...DAMAGE.

OR I'D... BE DEAD...

"EVEN SO... HE'S DRAWN... FIRST... BLOOD..."

WHO...?

SO YOU'VE COME TO FACE ME AT LAST! I AM THE ULTIMATE NOW... STRONG, CLEAN... AND SAFE!

FIGHT ME OR ALL THESE SHEEP DIE!

I'VE GOT TO HIT HIM QUICKLY, OR...

RRAASHH

NO...!

ROCK EVERYWHERE... HURT... CAN'T...

RRAACK

AAH

I'VE DONE IT! I'VE FINALLY BEATEN THE FLASH!!

AND NOW... THE FINAL DEFEAT! I'LL EXPOSE HIS *SECRET IDENTITY* TO THE WORLD!

THERE! THIS IS THE *FLASH*!

HE... LOOKS SO... YOUNG.

DOES ANYONE RECOGNIZE HIM?

OH, SURE. THAT'S WALLY WEST.

YEAH, HE'S BEEN *FLASH* FOR A COUPLE OF YEARS NOW.

EVERYBODY KNOWS WHO *HE* IS. HE'S BEEN ON TV 'N' EVERYTHING...

ON TV? YOU MEAN *EVERYONE* KNOWS? AND HE'S SOME *NEW* FLASH? I'VE BEATEN A *NOBODY*!?

ALL THOSE YEARS DEVELOPING MY INVENTION... I DIDN'T TALK TO PEOPLE... WATCH THE *NEWS*...

WHILE HE'S DISTRACTED... GOTTA SPLIT...

I'VE GOT TO GET *MORE* INFO ON MOTA, AND FIND A *WEAKNESS*! OTHERWISE I'VE HAD IT.

AND WHAT BETTER PLACE TO GO FOR ADVICE THAN THE PLACE HE *STOLE* HIS SUPPLIES?

ELYSIAN FIELDS NUCLEAR FACILITY
GATE B

9

"FORTUNATELY, WITH MY TITANS CLEARANCE AND MY JLE AUTHORITY, PEOPLE LIKE TO CO-OPERATE WITH ME..."

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT. THERE WAS NO ROBBERY HERE.

"...ALMOST ALL THE TIME."

"UNFORTUNATELY, DR. CARLOTTA MOREAU, THE PLANT SUPERVISOR, WAS HIDING SOMETHING, AND I DIDN'T KNOW WHY."

RIGHT. EVERY TIME THERE'S A PROBLEM BLAME IT ON NUCLEAR ENERGY! TOO FUNNY.

EVEN THOUGH WE'RE FORCED TO RUN A THIRD OF CAPACITY, EVEN THOUGH EVERYTHING HERE IS QUADRUPLE CHECKED, AS SOON AS THERE'S SOMETHING YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND ...POOR CROPS, COLD WEATHER--

NOW, LISTEN, LADY...

NO, YOU LISTEN! NOBODY EVER TALKS ABOUT THE THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE WHO DIE EACH YEAR FROM CONVENTIONAL POWER SOURCES!

POLLUTION, THE DECIMATION OF NATURAL RESOURCES... THAT NEVER GETS INTO THE EQUATION. TOO FUNNY...

WAIT A SECOND! YOU THINK IF YOU ADMIT TO A ROBBERY, THERE'LL BE ANOTHER INVESTIGATION AND THEY'LL CLOSE THIS PLACE DOWN!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE TALKING ABOUT.

BUT... IF THERE HAD BEEN A ROBBERY, THEY PROBABLY WOULD'VE TAKEN ...DEUTRINIUM-TRITIUM, OUR HEAVY ISOTOPES OF HYDROGEN, FOR USE IN FUSION EXPERIMENTS.

GREAT. I NEED TO KNOW...

DR. RONALD FISHER WAS OUR EXPERT IN FUSION RESEARCH. BUT HE WAS ...LAID OFF DURING THE INVESTIGATION LAST YEAR. HE WAS WORKING AS A BARTENDER IN KEYSTONE CITY LAST I...

THANKS.

"A BARTENDER! GREAT. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS VISIT EVERY BAR, RESTAURANT, CLUB AND LOUNGE IN KEYSTONE..."

10

"IT TAKES ME 10 PRECIOUS MINUTES. I WONDER WHAT FUSIONN IS DOING?"

DR. RONALD FISHER?

NO, ACTUALLY WHAT I NEED IS *ADVICE*. THERE'S THIS GUY USING *FUSION POWER* AND...

YO. THAT'S MY NAME, MIXOLOGY'S MY GAME.

CARE FOR A BLOODY MARY OR A STINGER?

YEAH, WE WERE WATCHING ON TV. HE'S A MEAN SUCKER, EH?

YOU THINK HE'S *REALLY* SOME KIND OF LIVING *FUSION BOMB*?

I GUESS. *HE* SEEMS TO THINK SO.

THAT'S NOT REAL LIKELY. SEE, A *FUSION BOMB* HAS A SMALL *ATOMIC BOMB* INSIDE IT, USUALLY WITH A CONVENTIONAL BOMB INSIDE *THAT*... YOU KNOW, TNT...

SO... EVEN IF THE HYDROGEN BOMB *DOESN'T* GO OFF, YOU'VE *STILL* GOT A COUPLE KTs* OF ATOMIC BOMB TO DEAL WITH..

THAT'S MORE THAN ENOUGH TO *WAKE* THE CAT.

ONE KT = ONE KILOTON (1000 TONS OF DYNAMITE) - BRIAN.

IF YOU'RE TRYING TO *FUSE* HYDROGEN ATOMS INTO HELIUM ATOMS, SAY, YOU NEED A LOT OF HEAT AND *PRESSURE*. IN THE PROCESS YOU LOSE A LITTLE *MATTER*.

MULTIPLY THAT BY THE *SPEED OF LIGHT*, LIKE ALBERT E. TAUGHT US, AND YOU'VE GOT A *LOT OF ENERGY*!

NOT AS MUCH AS IF YOU FUSED THEM INTO SOMETHING *REALLY* STABLE, LIKE *IRON*, BUT...

ENOUGH TO WAKE THE CAT?

YEP. HAVE SOME MINERAL WATER. IT'S ON THE HOUSE.

IF HE'S *ABSORBING* POWER THE WAY YOU SAY, THEN HE MUST BE USING WHATEVER HE BLASTS AS *FUEL*, RECYCLING THE ENERGY TO KEEP THE REACTION GOING.

UH-HUH. COULD I HAVE A FEW *BAGS* OF THOSE PRETZELS, TOO? I'M GOING TO NEED THEM

YOU *SURE* KNOW YOUR STUFF. TOO BAD YOU GOT LAID OFF.

IS *THAT* WHAT THEY TOLD YOU? *NAHH*. I WAS CANNED.

I WENT TO THE *NRC** WITH SOME IRREGULARITIES IN THEIR *WASTE DISPOSAL*, AND NOW NOBODY'LL *TOUCH* ME!

* *NUCLEAR REGULATORY AGENCY--* BRIAN.

YOUR BUDDY THERE MUST BE USING AN INTERNAL *LASER* TO POWER THE INITIAL REACTION, PRETTY DARN POWERFUL...

LOOK, I'M *NEVER* GOING TO BE ABLE TO REMEMBER ALL THIS STUFF. WILL YOU COME ALONG? CENTRAL CITY'S *DEAD* IF I DON'T STOP HIM.

I DUNNO. LIZ, CAN YOU COVER FOR ME, HERE?

I GUESS. WILL YOU BE BACK BY FOUR? IT STARTS TO PICK UP ABOUT THEN.

SURE, NO PROBLEM. HOW LONG COULD THIS...?

(12)

YIKES...! POINT ME TOWARDS THE OUTHOUSE!

NO TIME. YOU STAY HERE, I'LL RECONNOITER.

DEAL.

OH-OH.

NOW, TRAITOR, I'VE FINALLY GOT YOU! SOON YOU'LL FEEL THE FLESH RUN LIKE *WARM SUET* OFF YOUR BONES!

RUN FOR THE ROCKS OVER THERE, NADINE. I'LL DEAL WITH MOTA!

"I'LL DEAL WITH MOTA"... I WONDER *HOW?*

HAH? WHERE IS SHE? OH, IT'S YOU, *IMPOSTOR!* I'M EVEN *MORE* POWERFUL! AND *EVEN SAFER!* COME TO YOUR *DEATH!*

NOT A DENT! HE'S NEARLY *INVULNERABLE!*

TANG TANG TANG TANG

DIE, LUNATIC *INSECT!!* HA!

FRAASSCC HH

13

NOW... I CAN WRECK THE REST OF THE CITY AT MY LEISURE, OR I CAN *ROAST* EVERY LIVING BEING IN THIS TOWN! I CAN DO... *ANYTHING* I WANT!

PRAZT

UHHHH... HE MUST THINK I'M *DEAD*. I *FEEL* DEAD...

WHAT ARE THESE THINGS? THEY'RE ALL AROUND HERE...

RON, WHAT ARE...? DR. MOREAU! WHAT...?

I REALIZED THAT IF THIS DOOFUS IS ALLOWED TO DESTROY THE TOWN WITH *OUR* HYDROGEN, IT'LL BE *ANOTHER* BLACK MARK AGAINST THE PLANT. SO, I'M *HERE*.

WHAT'S THAT?

I'M NOT SURE...

IRON. HE'S PRODUCING... MY GOD. TO BE FUSING HYDROGEN INTO *IRON*, THE ENERGY HE'S PRODUCING MUST BE... *BEYOND MEASURE*.

YIKES. WE'RE DEAD.

SO HOW DO WE STOP HIM?

NOT WITH FORCE. *HE* HAS ALL THAT.

WE HAVE TO TERMINATE THE *REACTION* ITSELF.

THAT HYDROGEN HAS TO BE UNDER TERRIFIC *PRESSURE*. IF THE PRESSURE WERE *LOWERED*...

... THE REACTION WOULD STOP, *INSTANTLY*... *RIGHT!*

14

AND TO LOWER THE PRESSURE I JUST HAVE TO *PENETRATE* ONE OF THE TANKS... *THIS* SHOULD DO FINE!

OF COURSE...

FIRST I HAVE TO GET A GOOD START...

THEN REALLY POUR ON THE *SPEED*...

EVEN *FASTER*...

AND THROW THIS *IRON PELLET* AT SUPER-SPEED. LIKE BARRY USED TO SAY... IT'LL BE "LIKE A *STRAW* IN A *HURRICANE*..."

PINNGGK*

SSSSSSSSSSSSSS

"...DRIVEN THROUGH AN *OAK* TREE!"

15

I DID IT! AND BEFORE RON COULD EVEN FINISH HIS...

...HYDROGEN IS PRETTY *UNSTABLE*, EXPLOSIVE STUFF. AND AN EXPLOSION, WITH AN *ENERGY ABSORBER* LIKE MOTA COULD BE *DANGEROUS*.

BLLAM

YAAAAAAAAAAAH!

FLASH, WHAT...?

DON'T TALK...

WHOOSH

RUN!

"LIKE I SAID, YOU NEVER KNOW WHO YOU'RE GOING TO HAVE TO CARRY."

HIS ARMOR IS RECYCLING THE ENERGY, EVEN AS IT DISINTEGRATES, *INTENSIFYING* THE EXPLOSION!

AT LAST! ENOUGH POWER!

HE'S MELTING INTO THE EARTH'S CRUST...!

ENOUGH... I AM SAFE!

FINALLY SAFE...

16

THAT'LL TAKE MONTHS TO COOL.

YIKES! AND ME WITHOUT MY MARSHMALLOWS!

HEY, GROUP, LET'S RETIRE TO MY *BISTRO*! FIRST ROUND'S ON ME!

FLASH! FLASH, PLEASE WAIT!

OH, NO! THE *SHOE GUY*! WHY CAN'T I *SHAKE* THIS GUY?!

I HAVE *NOTHING* TO DO WITH *SHOES*! I MUST *TALK* TO YOU!

I HAVE TO ASK...

BEEP BEEP BEEP

I MAY EVEN SPRING FOR *TWO*.

"ONE REASON I ALWAYS TRY TO BE PREPARED ON A CASE IS THAT I'VE NOTICED, ONCE THINGS START ROLLING, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN."

NOW LET'S FOLLOW JOHN FOX AS HE HEADS BACK TO HIS FUTURE...

GENERATIONS finale

VIDAR! TACHYON RETROFLOW TAPERING! TIMESKIP FINISHED! PREPARE FOR TRAVELLER RE-ENTRY!

NO! JOHN FAILED TO MAKE CONTACT!

THEN WE'VE LOST... JOHN WAS OUR ONLY HOPE!

VIDAR!

WARNING

BREET BREET BREET

MYTRE! MY GOD, WHAT--

POWER SURGE! RADIATION'S POURING IN FROM OUTSIDE!

WE'RE LOSING CONTROL! WHAT'S HAPPENING?

I DON'T KNOW--BUT WHATEVER HAPPENS, STAY FIXED ON JOHN--OR HE'LL NEVER SURVIVE RE-ENTRY!

MYTRE--OUT THERE--IT'S HIM!

G·5536

THE RADIATION--IT'S COMING FROM MOTA!

AFTER 800 YEARS OF DORMANCY-- HE'S BECOME A CREATURE OF LIVING PLUTONIUM--

--PRIMED TO EXPLODE IN ONE MASSIVE NUCLEAR BLAST!

THE TACHYON RETROFLOW IS OFF THE CHARTS! JOHN'S BEEN OVERCOME BY FASTER-THAN-LIGHT RADIATION! HE'S GONE!

VIDAR! EVACUATE PREMISES!

OVERLOAD

SREESH

ZZZHT

PH

EVACUATE! EVAC--

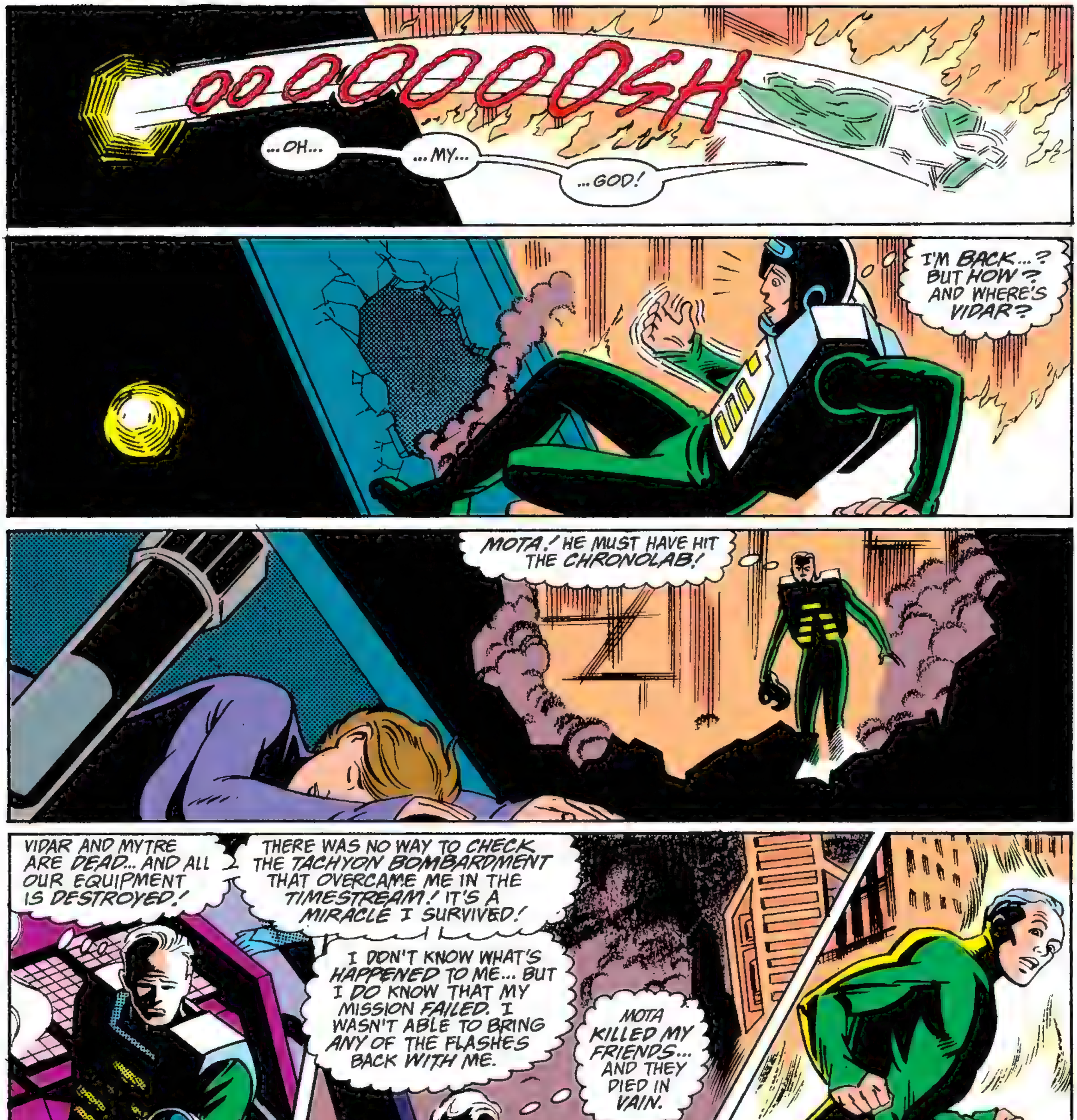
KA WHOOM

VVVVMMM

KA-RACK

WHOOOOO

OH GOD, OH GOD, OH GOD, OH GOD...


OOOOOOSH
...OH...
...MY...
...GOD!
I'M BACK...? BUT HOW? AND WHERE'S VIDAR?
MOTA! HE MUST HAVE HIT THE CHRONOLAB!
VIDAR AND MYTRE ARE DEAD... AND ALL OUR EQUIPMENT IS DESTROYED!
THERE WAS NO WAY TO CHECK THE TACHYON BOMBARDMENT THAT OVERCAME ME IN THE TIMESTREAM! IT'S A MIRACLE I SURVIVED!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO ME... BUT I DO KNOW THAT MY MISSION FAILED. I WASN'T ABLE TO BRING ANY OF THE FLASHES BACK WITH ME.
MOTA KILLED MY FRIENDS... AND THEY DIED IN VAIN.
OR... DID THEY...?

OR...

...DID...

FLASH MUSEUM

...THEY?

FLASHPOINT

THIS SPEED--THE TACHYON RADIATION! NOT ONLY DIDN'T IT KILL ME...

...IT GAVE ME ONE FINAL CHANCE TO REDEEM MYSELF!

AND IT'S A CHANCE I HAVE TO TAKE.

SPLEESSH

5

"THEY WOULD HAVE FOUND A WAY TO STOP MOTA..."

WALLY WEST FLASH III

JAY GARRICK FLASH I

WALLY WEST KID FLASH

BARRY ALLEN FLASH II

... MAYBE THERE'S A WAY THEY CAN STILL HELP...

... ALONG WITH A BIT OF SUPER-SPEED RE-WEAVING!

HUH? WHO...

ALL RIGHT, MOTA. IT'S OVER.

IT'S ME, MOTA...

THE FLASH!

YOUR RADIATION'S OUT OF CONTROL! HALF THE PEOPLE IN THIS CITY ARE DEAD!

OH-- UNNFF-- OH, YEAH?

WELL, HERO-- IF YOU'RE REALLY A FLASH...

...THEN YOU'RE NOT GETTING OFF THAT LUCKY!

I HATE FLASHES!

SKREESH

WELL, AFTER SEVEN CENTURIES, YOU SHOULD KNOW...

...THAT WE'RE NOT PARTICULARLY FOND OF YOU, EITHER!

EVEN WITH MY PROTECTIVE AURA, THERE'S A LIMIT TO HOW MUCH OF MOTA'S TOUCH I CAN TAKE!

MAYBE I CAN CREATE A VACUUM AROUND HIM.

TOO LATE! THAT GLOW-- VIDAR WARNED US THAT WOULD BE THE FINAL SIGN.' HE'S GOING TO DETONATE-- IN MINUTES!

UNNNHHH!

SPAF

NICE TRY... LOSER. BUT YOUR TIME IS UP-- AND SO'S MINE.

S-HOOOM

BUT IF I GOTTA GO... I'M GOIN' IN STYLE.

N--AHUH, AHUHN--

N-NO! IT'S OVER! HE'S GOING-- AHUNH-- GOING NUCLEAR! I CAN STOP HIM-- BUT I NEED MORE TIME!

OH, GOD... JUST A LITTLE MORE...

...TIME?

THE FLASH'S TREADMILL

CONSTRUCTED BY BARRY ALLEN, THIS DEVICE ALLOWED THE FLASHES, WHEN RUNNING AT TOP SPEED, TO SET UP SPECIAL INTERNAL VIBRATIONS WITHIN THEIR BODIES THAT PROJECTED THEM INTO OTHER TIME PERIODS. TO RETURN TO THEIR OWN TIME THE FLASHES NEEDED ONLY TO CEASE THEIR INTERNAL VIBRATIONS.

FWAP WAPWAP

SORRY, MOTA--

ZZZHOOM!!

-- BUT I'VE REVIEWED YOUR SITUATION!

NOT ONLY IS YOUR TIME NOT UP...

... BUT YOU'VE BEEN GRANTED AN EXTENSION!

AS A MATTER OF FACT--

KA-RAK!

--YOU'RE ABOUT TO HAVE ALL THE TIME THERE IS!

WH-WHERE ARE WE...?

ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE TIME BARRIER, CREEP-- AND ON OUR WAY TO THE YEAR FIFTY BILLION A.D.!

NOW, AS A CREATURE OF LIVING PLUTONIUM, I FIGURE IT WOULD TAKE ABOUT THAT LONG FOR YOU TO DECAY AND TURN TO LEAD!

BUT FORTUNATELY FOR YOU, MY OWN VIBRATIONS KEEP YOU FROM ACTUALLY AGING AS WE GO.

OR THEY WOULD--

--IF I WERE STICKING AROUND FOR THE RIDE!

NEVER MESS WITH A PARTICLE PHYSICIST...

... JERK.

"HAVE A NICE TRIP, MOTA... AND REMEMBER...

"IF THERE'S EVEN A SPARK OF CONSCIOUSNESS LEFT IN YOUR INHUMAN BODY, I WANT YOU TO KNOW, NOW AND FOREVER...

"... THAT EVEN THOUGH IT TOOK 700 YEARS, THEY BEAT YOU."

WE BEAT YOU.

EPILOGUE.

FLASH MUSEUM

FLASH DAY

FLASH DAY

'SCUSE... 'SCUSE ME...

'SCUSE...

FLASH DAY

KIM!

YOU'RE LATE.

SORRY. RUNS IN THE FAMILY. STARTED YET?

JUST.

PEOPLE OF CENTRAL CITY! ONE MONTH AGO, OUR METROPLEX WAS NEARLY OBLITERATED BY A BEING OF LIMITLESS FORCE!

HE WAS UNSTOPPABLE-- UNTIL A HERO ROSE FORTH TO END HIS REIGN OF DESTRUCTION!

WHO THE HERO WAS REMAINS A MYSTERY. WE KNOW ONLY THAT HE TOOK HIS CUE FROM THE HEROIC LEGENDS OF THE PAST--

--AND THAT HE IS NOW A LEGEND FOR TODAY!

HE IS THAT-- THOUGH NO ONE'S SEEN HIM SINCE. WHAT'S YOUR TAKE ON IT, JOHN?

OH, DON'T ASK ME ABOUT HEROES, KIM. EVERYONE KNOWS THEY COME AND GO.

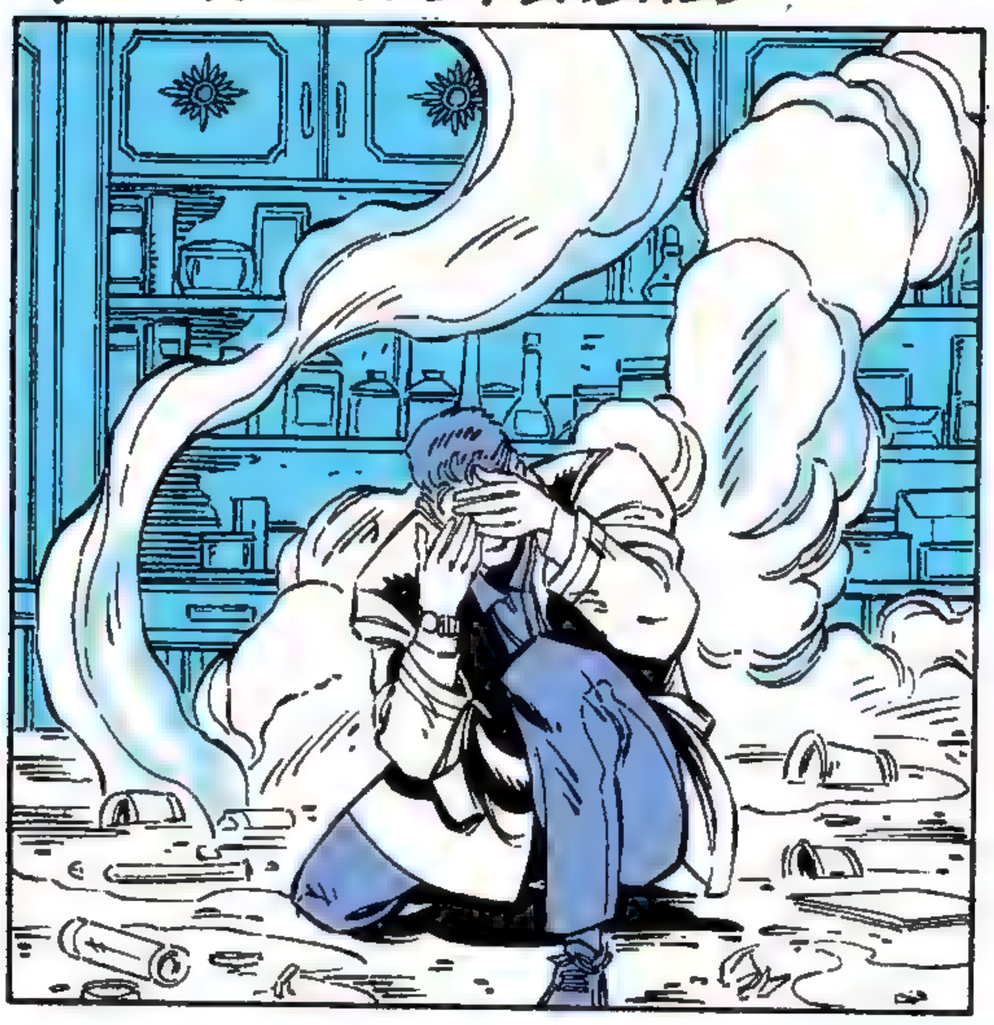
LEGENDS, HOWEVER--THEY'RE ANOTHER MATTER ENTIRELY.

LEGENDS... LIVE FOREVER.

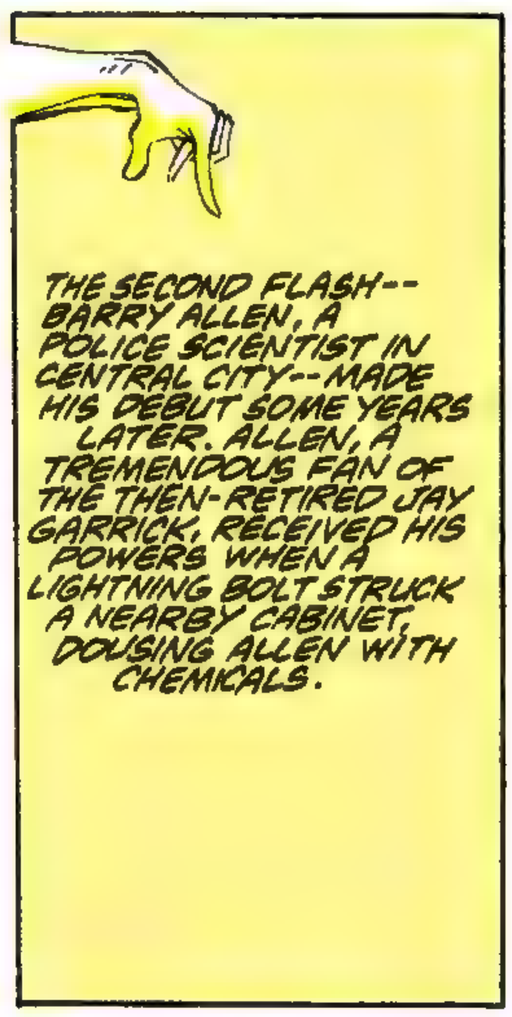
FIN

FLASH FACTS

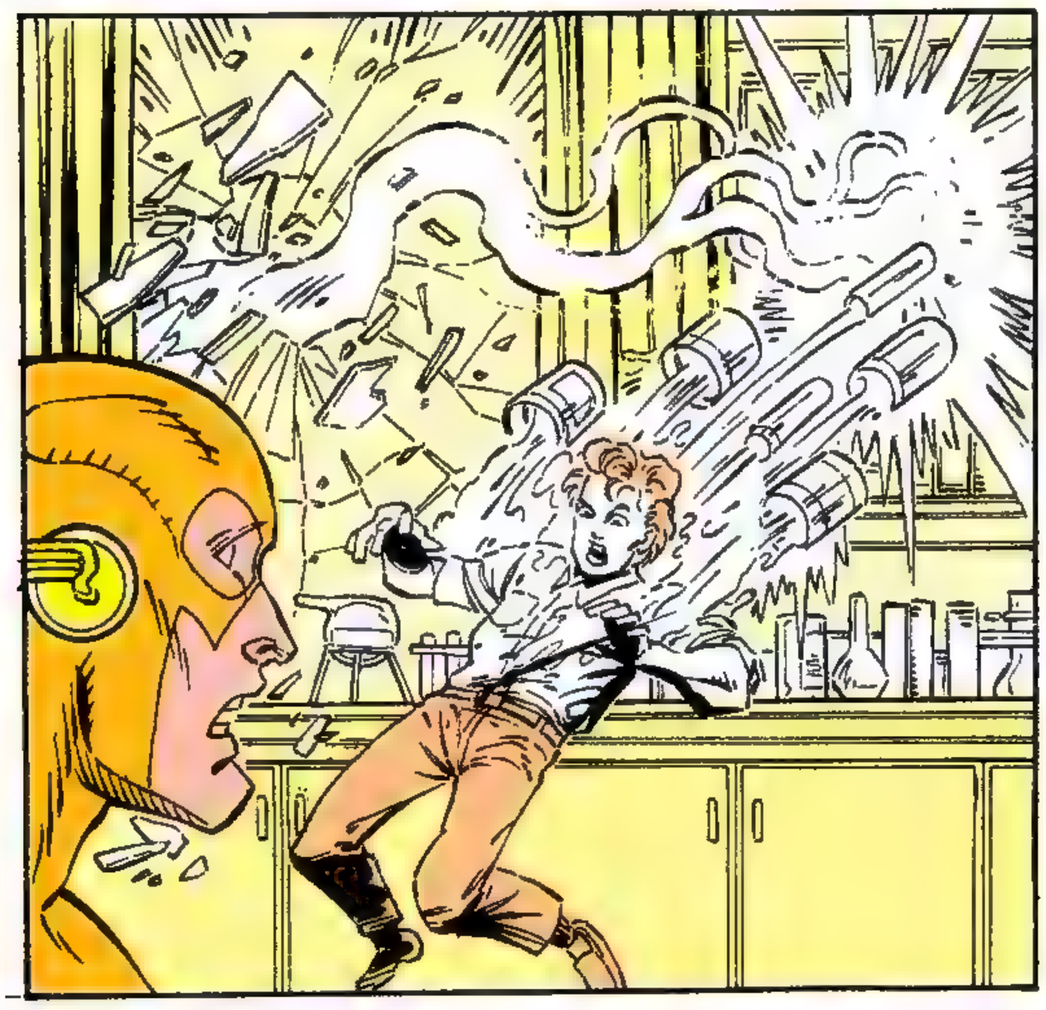
WHO ARE THE FLASHES?

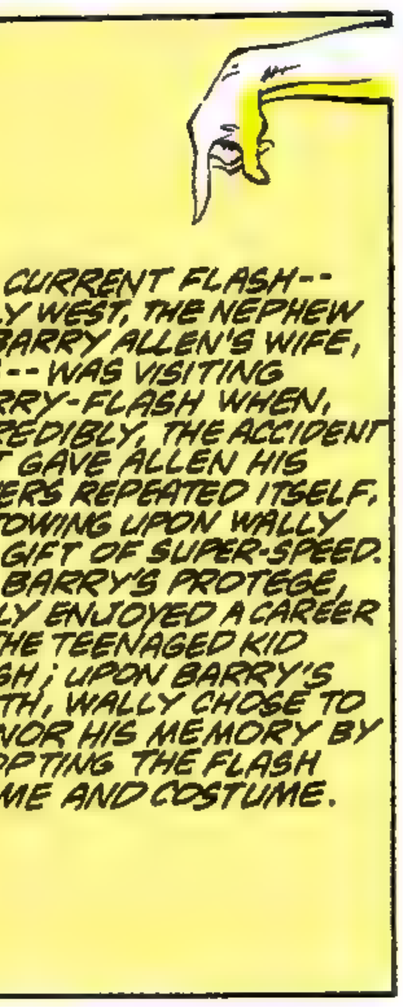


THE FIRST FLASH-- JAY GARRICK, A COLLEGE STUDENT IN KEYSTONE CITY-- ACCIDENTALLY SPILLED SOME EXPERIMENTAL "HARD WATER", THE FUMES OF WHICH GAVE HIM THE POWER TO MOVE AT SUPERHUMAN SPEED. JAY'S SUPER-HERO CAREER PEAKED DURING THE 1940s, DURING WHICH HE SERVED AS A MEMBER OF THE JUSTICE SOCIETY OF AMERICA.



THE SECOND FLASH-- BARRY ALLEN, A POLICE SCIENTIST IN CENTRAL CITY-- MADE HIS DEBUT SOME YEARS LATER. ALLEN, A TREMENDOUS FAN OF THE THEN-RETIRED JAY GARRICK, RECEIVED HIS POWERS WHEN A LIGHTNING BOLT STRUCK A NEARBY CABINET, DOUSING ALLEN WITH CHEMICALS.

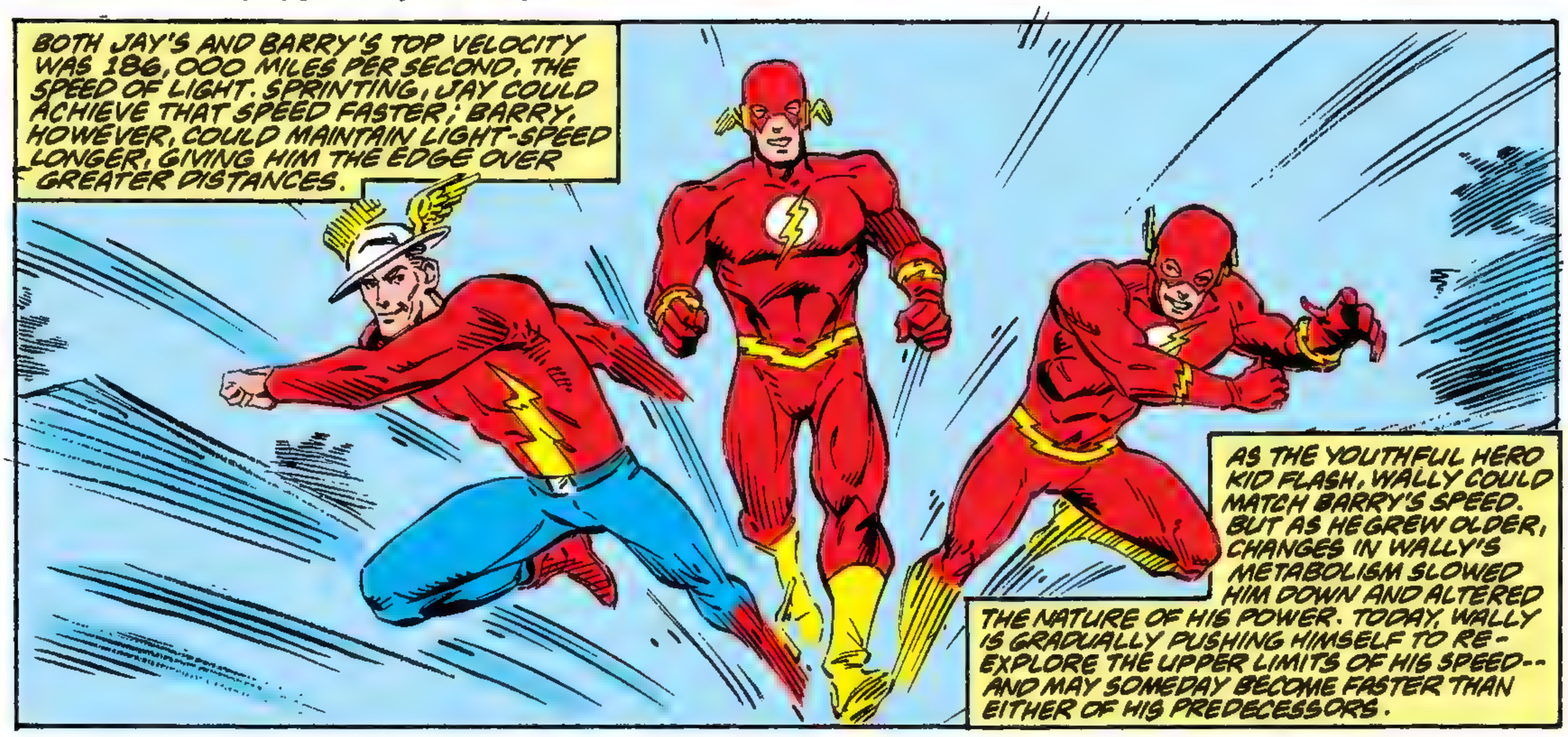




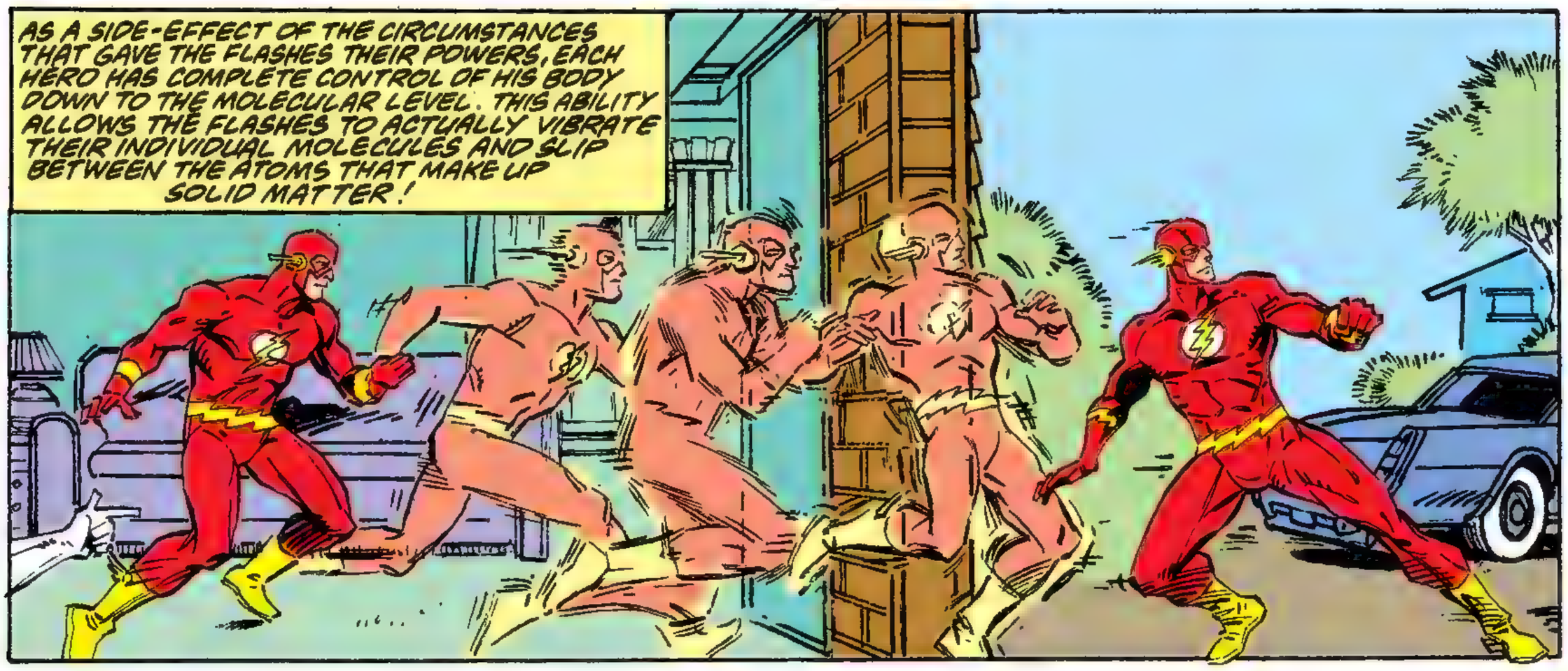
THE CURRENT FLASH-- WALLY WEST, THE NEPHEW OF BARRY ALLEN'S WIFE, IRIS-- WAS VISITING BARRY-FLASH WHEN, INCREDIBLY, THE ACCIDENT THAT GAVE ALLEN HIS POWERS REPEATED ITSELF, BESTOWING UPON WALLY THE GIFT OF SUPER-SPEED. AS BARRY'S PROTEGE, WALLY ENJOYED A CAREER AS THE TEENAGED KID FLASH; UPON BARRY'S DEATH, WALLY CHOSE TO HONOR HIS MEMORY BY ADOPTING THE FLASH NAME AND COSTUME.

TEXT: MARK WAID • ART: PARIS CULLINS • LETTERS: ALBERT DE GUZMAN

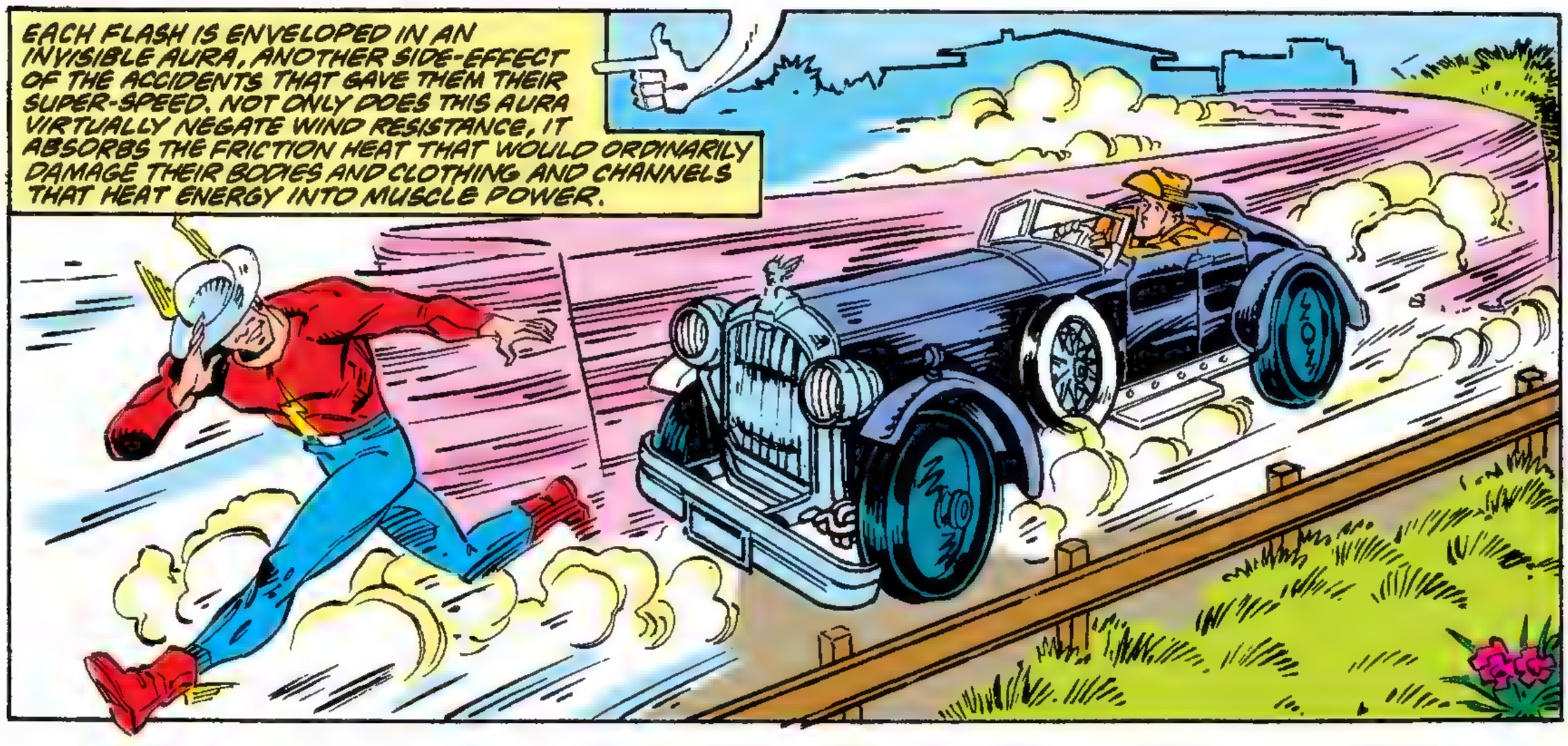
HOW FAST IS A FLASH?



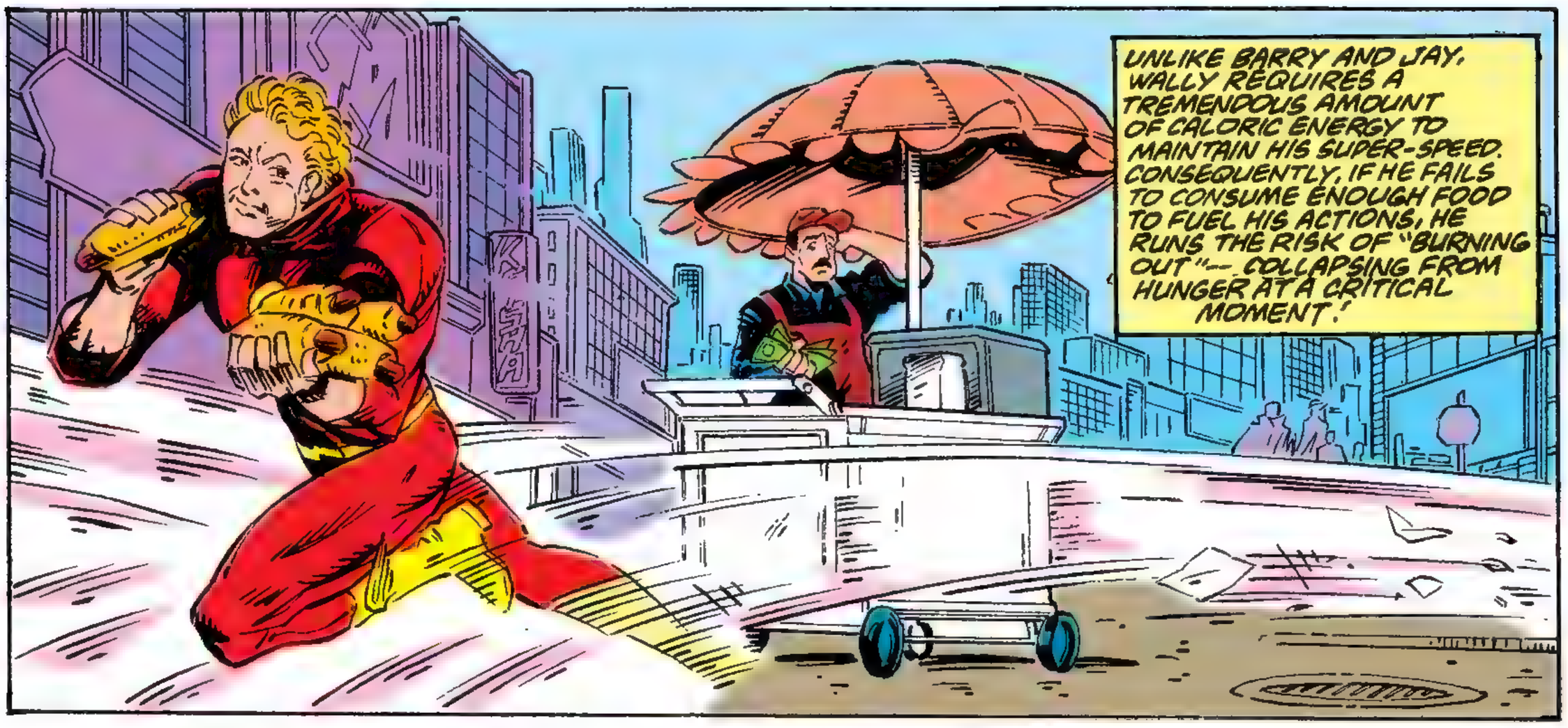
HOW DO THE FLASHES RUN THROUGH SOLID MATTER?



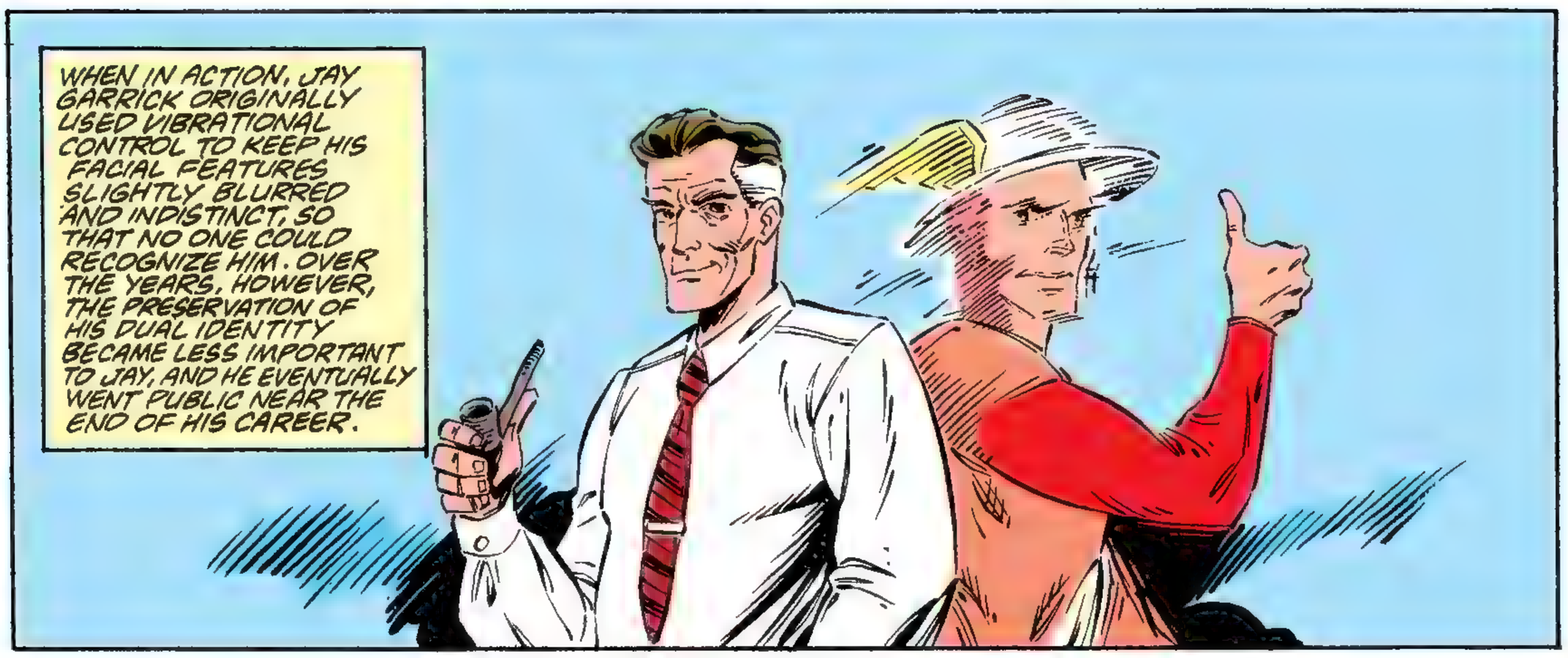
WHAT PROTECTS A FLASH FROM AIR FRICTION?



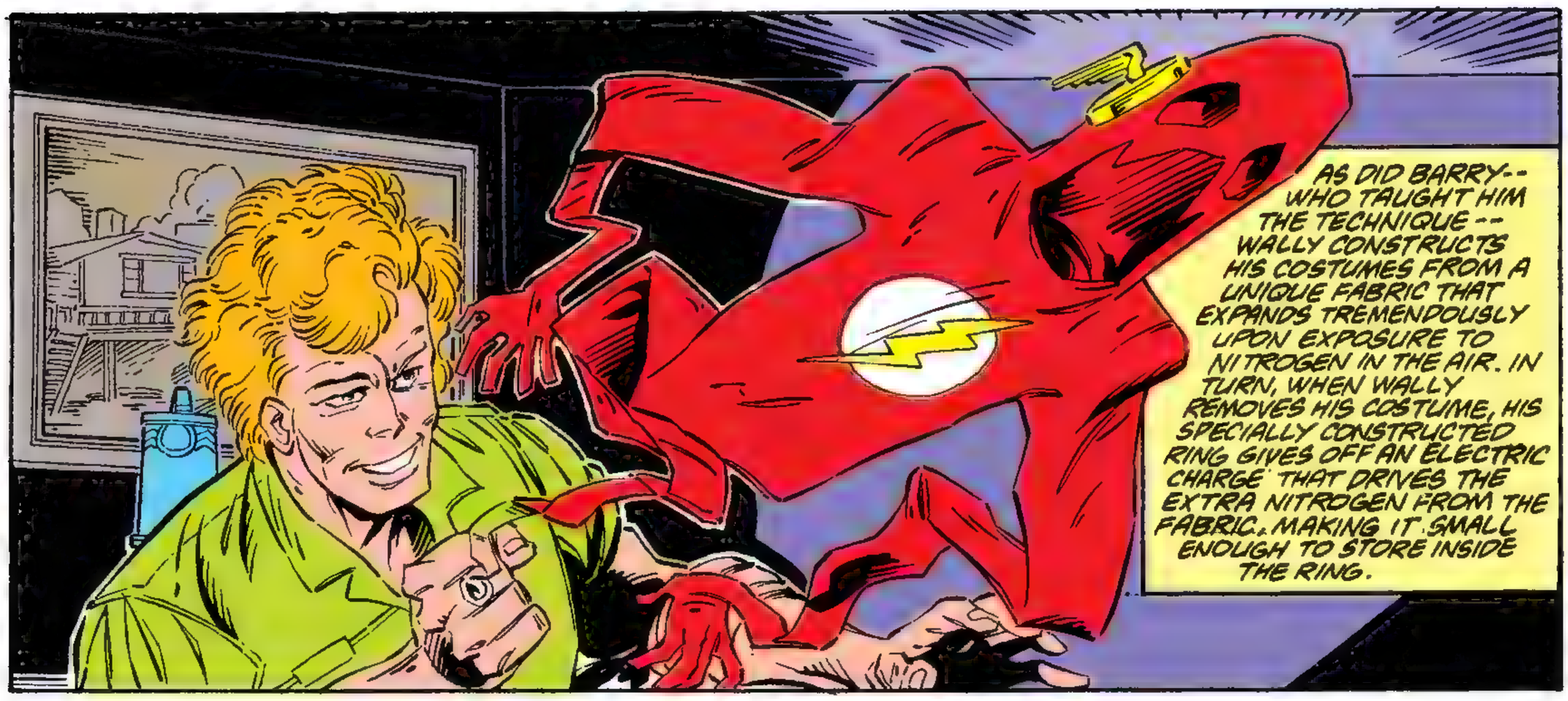
HOW DOES WALLY'S SPEED DIFFER FROM BARRY'S AND JAY'S?



HOW DID THE MASKLESS JAY GARRICK MAINTAIN A SECRET IDENTITY?



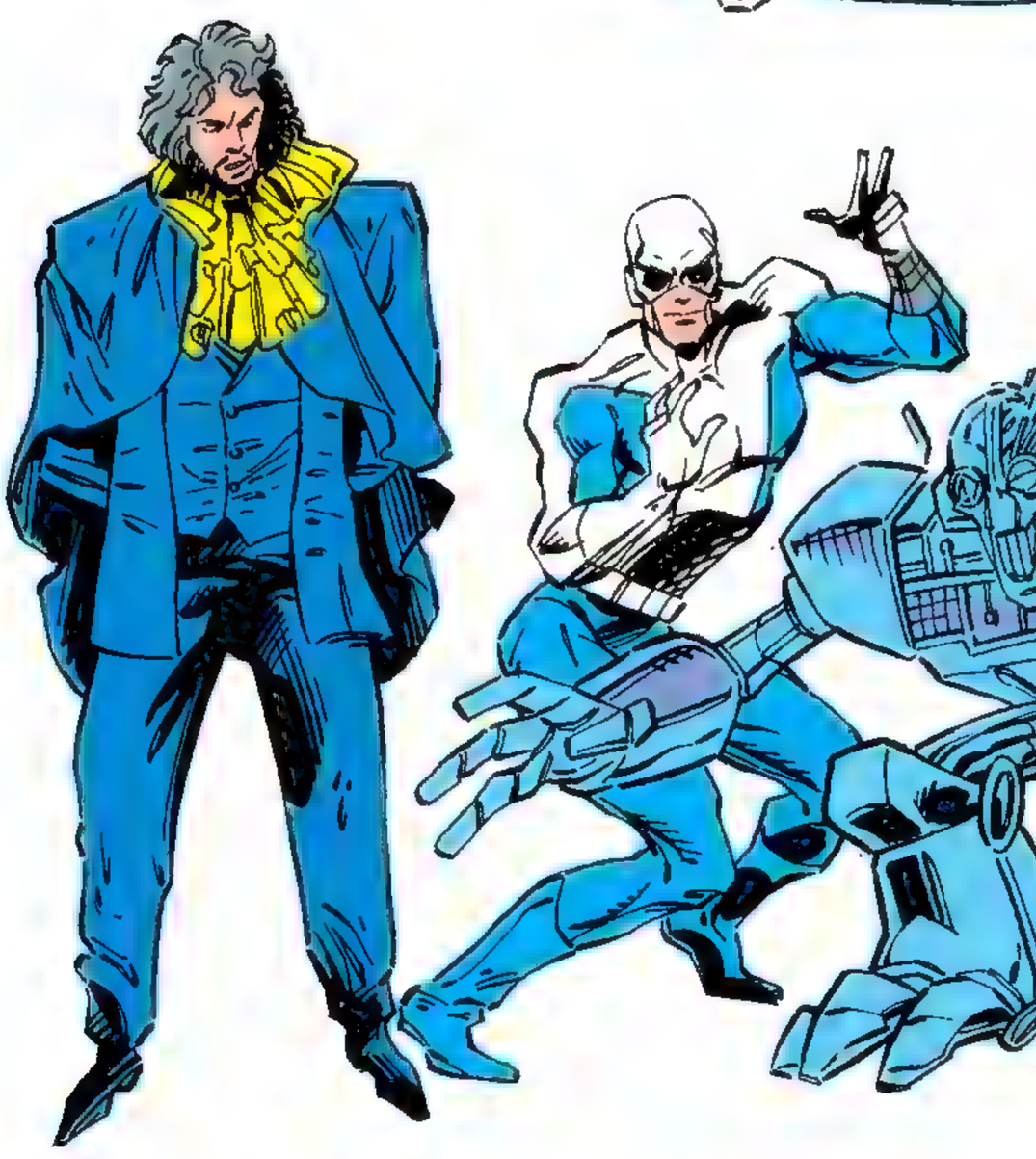
WHERE DOES WALLY WEST STORE HIS COSTUME?



WHO ARE THE FOES OF THE FLASH?

IN HIS HEYDAY, JAY GARRICK BATTLED A NUMBER OF DEADLY FOES, INCLUDING FIDDLER, THE THINKER, THE SHADE, STAR SAPPHIRE AND THE TURTLE.

BARRY ALLEN ACCUMULATED HIS OWN GALLERY OF ROGUES, COMBATTING SUCH VILLAINS AS CAPTAIN COLD, MIRROR MASTER, PIED PIPER, THE TOP, CAPTAIN BOOMERANG, AND GORILLA GRODD.



TODAY, WALLY WEST FIGHTS NEW MENACES, SUCH AS KILG%RE, VANDAL SAVAGE, SPEED DEMON AND BLUE TRINITY-- WITH MANY MORE TO COME IN THE DAYS AHEAD, AS HIS ADVENTURES CONTINUE EACH MONTH IN THE PAGES OF FLASH®

ARMAGEDDON 2001™

THE FLASH®

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

DC®

ANNUAL 1991

FLASH

4

BY WAID, BRASFIELD & PEPOY

PAROBECK/BURCHETT

IT'S THE 21ST CENTURY... DO YOU KNOW WHERE *YOUR* SUPER-HEROES ARE?!

Cover by **Mike Parobeck** and **Rick Burchett**

SHATTERED

HIS NAME IS WAVERIDER, AND HE HAS TRAVELLED TO THE PAST... TO SAVE THE FUTURE.

THE FUTURE OF 2030, A TIME WHEN THE WORLD IS RULED BY A TYRANT KNOWN ONLY AS MONARCH.

ONCE UPON A TIME, THE MONARCH HAD ANOTHER NAME, ONE LONG FORGOTTEN. ONCE, HE WAS ONE OF EARTH'S SUPER-HEROES.

ONE WHO BETRAYED HIS COMRADES, SLAYING THEM ALL AND MAKING THEIR CORPSES THE STEPPING STONES TO AN ERA OF DARKNESS.

WITH A TOUCH, THE WAVERIDER CAN SEE A MAN'S FUTURE-- FIND OUT WHAT HIS TOMORROWS HOLD. AND SOON HE WILL DISCOVER WHICH OF EARTH'S CHAMPIONS WILL ULTIMATELY BECOME THE MONARCH.

IT COULD BE ANY ONE OF THEM. A MAN OF STEEL... A KNIGHT OF DARKNESS...

...OR A SCARLET SPEEDSTER.

FLASH APPRECIATION DAY

FLASH

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST.

MAYOR ROY "FLASH" STONER

FLASH

I USED TO LIVE IN NEW YORK CITY WITH ABOUT 1400 OTHER SUPER-HEROES. NEVER ONCE DID NEW YORK HAVE A "FLASH DAY."

Mr Wallace West

FRIENDS OF The FLASH

Ms Joan Garrick

Mason Trailbridge

Chunk

KEYSTONE CITY celebrates THE

Dr TINA McGEE

Jerry McGee

THAT'S NOT WHY I MOVED TO KEYSTONE CITY, OF COURSE. AFTER ALL, MY JOB IS ITS OWN REWARD.

LASH is No. 1!!

BIG

STILL... ISN'T THIS GREAT?

HE'S EATING IT *UP*, ISN'T HE?

WITH A *SPOON.*

The

MASON

SHALL WE TELL HIM THAT THIS WHOLE THING SMELLS LIKE ONE OF THE MAYOR'S *RE-ELECTION STUNTS?*

WHAT? AND SPOIL HIS *FUN?*

FLASH

MAY ROY ST

HE HASN'T... EVEN HIT THE... *BUFFET TABLE...* YET.

HEY! ARE YOU *SOMEBODY?*

FLASH

WALLY WEST

ASHARIFIC

YES. I'M *ABRA KADABRA.*

COOL! CAN YOU *DO A TRICK?*

SURE. GET READY TO WATCH ME *DISAPPEAR.*

WHY ARE WE *HERE?*

READ THE *SIGN.* WE'RE *FRIENDS OF THE FLASH.*

THE *FLASH!* THEY REVERE HIM *TODAY...*

... EVEN THOUGH HE MAY BECOME THE DESPOT WHO RULES *TOMORROW.*

3

IN ORDER TO *FIND OUT MORE*, I MUST GET *CLOSE* TO HIM...

... AND DISCOVER WHAT THE *FUTURE* HOLDS FOR THE *FASTEST MAN ALIVE!*

EXCUSE ME--FLASH? MY NAME IS *BONNIE BLACKMON*. LISTEN, THIS MIGHT SOUND *WEIRD*, BUT I... I NEED TO *TALK* TO SOMEBODY.

WOW.

THEN LET'S MAKE IT *ME*. WHAT CAN I *DO* FOR YOU, BONNIE?

UH, WELL, I FOUND THESE *PAPERS*...

FLAGSTAFF, ARIZONA.

AUGUST 31.

2001.

KLUMP

DIANE! I'M HOME! HOW WAS YOUR DAY?

HARRIED. THOUGHT I COULD WHIP UP SOME SPAGHETTI, THOUGH. HUNGRY?

ALWAYS.

DAD! CAN I GO OUTSIDE?

WHY, HELLO TO YOU, TOO.

UP FOR SOME CATCH WITH YOUR OLD MAN, SPORT?

NAH. YOU THROW TOO EASY.

TOO EASY? WATCH IT, YOU-- MAKIN' FUN OF THE FAMOUS EDWARDS FASTBALL, huh? HUH?

IT'S TH' =hee= TH' EDWARDS WEENIEBALL. YOU! =hee ha ha=

5

WEENIEBALL? WEENIEBALL? THAT'S MY *DEADMAN* SPECIAL, PAL!

WEENIEBAHAHAHA... WEENIEBALL, PAL!

I KNOW *TWO* GUYS WHO ARE GONNA BE *DEAD MEN* IF THEY DON'T *COOL THEIR JETS!*

HE STARTED IT.

DID *NOT!* =ha ha ha ha=

SO =ha ha!

SO CAN I GO OUTSIDE?

MAY YOU GO OUTSIDE.

I THOUGHT I WAS ASKING.

YOU *ARE*, I'M JUST TEACHING-- OH, SKIP IT. WHAT DOES *MOM* THINK?

WELL, HE *HAS* BEEN A PRETTY GOOD BOY TODAY...

HMMM... NOT MANY PEOPLE OUT... KIND OF QUIET... ALL RIGHT, THEN, BUT JUST UNTIL DINNER! AND REMEMBER, DAVID--

--TAKE IT *SLOW.*

YES, SIR!

WILL HE BE OKAY? SHOULD ONE OF US BE OUT THERE *WITH* HIM? WHAT IF HE--

HE'LL BE FINE. HE KNOWS THE RULES BY NOW.

6

SO DID YOU REMEMBER TO PICK UP THAT COAT?

UH HUH. BOY, WON'T DAVID BE EXCITED WHEN HE FINDS THIS UNDER THE CHRISTMAS TREE. "OH, BOY-- CLOTHES!"

SHOULD WE JUST GIVE IT TO HIM NOW? WHAT IF IT GETS COLD?

MICHAEL EDWARDS! THIS IS AUGUST. MOREOVER, WE'RE IN ARIZONA. NOW, WILL YOU PLEASE JUST HIDE THE COAT?

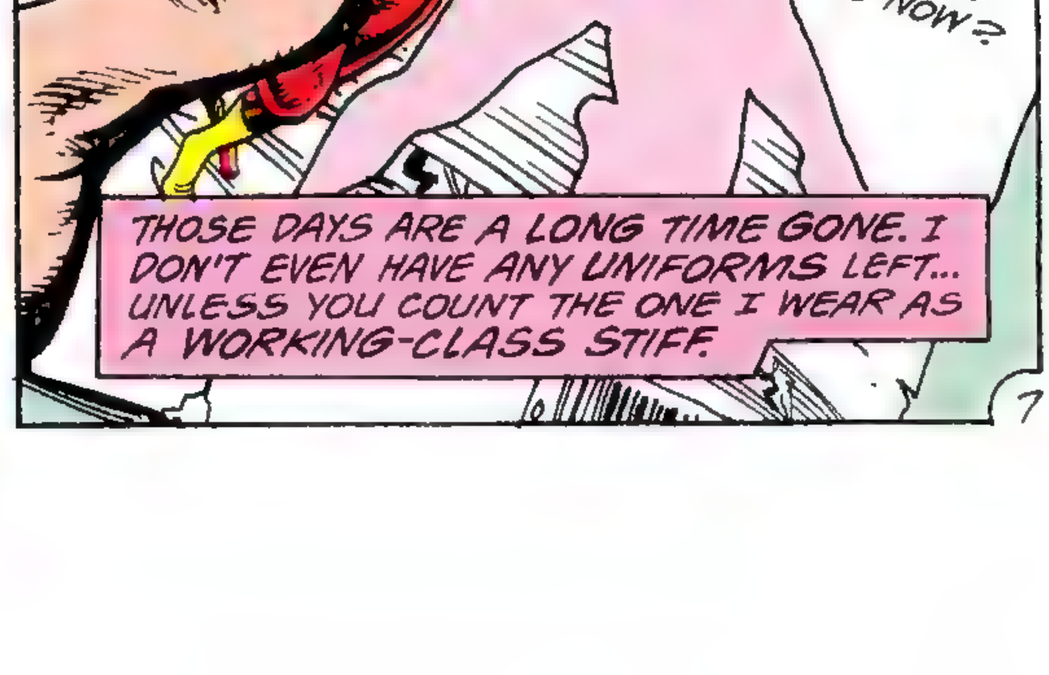
MICHAEL EDWARDS.

MY NAME IS MIKE EDWARDS. HAS BEEN FOR NINE YEARS NOW.

I USED TO GO BY TWO OTHER NAMES. MY MOM CALLED ME WALLY WEST.

MOST EVERYONE ELSE CALLED ME THE FLASH.

TRAVEL RECEIPTS



THOSE DAYS ARE A LONG TIME GONE. I DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY UNIFORMS LEFT... UNLESS YOU COUNT THE ONE I WEAR AS A WORKING-CLASS STIFF.

EVERYTHING'S DIFFERENT NOW... BUT GOOD. AND VERY COMFORTABLE. NOW I'VE GOT A WIFE AND SON.

I'M LUCKY TO HAVE THEM.

ESPECIALLY DAVID. I THANK GOD EVERY DAY THAT HE'S GOING TO MAKE IT. TOO MANY OTHERS...

THEY SAY CHILDREN CAN'T INHERIT ACQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS. CERTAINLY NOT SUPER-POWERS.

BUT A LOT OF SUPER-HEROES ARE WHAT THEY ARE BECAUSE THEY CARRY AN X-FACTOR IN THEIR GENETIC MAKEUP-- SOMETHING CALLED THE METAGENE.

NOW WE'RE FINDING THAT WHEN THE META-GENE IS PASSED ALONG TO OFFSPRING, THINGS... HAPPEN... TO THE CHILDREN.

ELONGATED MAN'S KID TURNED OUT OKAY. ZEROMAN'S BOY EVEN INHERITED HIS POWERS. BUT THEN THERE WERE DR. FATE'S TWINS.

THE WORST WAS FIRE. I REMEMBER HER AND I'M GRATEFUL THAT DAVID WAS AS LUCKY AS HE WAS.

HE INHERITED MY SPEED. IF ONLY HE HAD...

REVIEWS

TRAGEDY STRIKES SUPER-HEROINE FIRE'S PRIVATE GRIEF.

BEATRIZ DaCOSTA

VES ATKINSON

... HE'S GOING TO BE FINE.

NEWSBEEP

FLASH

1993 (CAN)

SO HOW'S THE NEW JOB? WANNA GO BACK TO BEING A HOUSEHUSBAND?

WHAT? AND GIVE UP COMPUTER PARTS SALES? THEY LOVE ME AT THE PLANT.

COMPUTER PARTS

YEAH? WHY SO?

BECAUSE I KNOW EVERY PART NUMBER BY HEART.

SO COULD THEY IF THEY READ THE CATALOGS A DOZEN TIMES EACH EVERY NIGHT.

ACE MOVING

MIKE! DON'T DO THAT IN FRONT OF THE WINDOW, FOR GOD'S SAKE! WHAT IF SOMEONE LOOKS IN? REMEMBER THAT GUY LAST WEEK--THE ONE IN THE COAT?

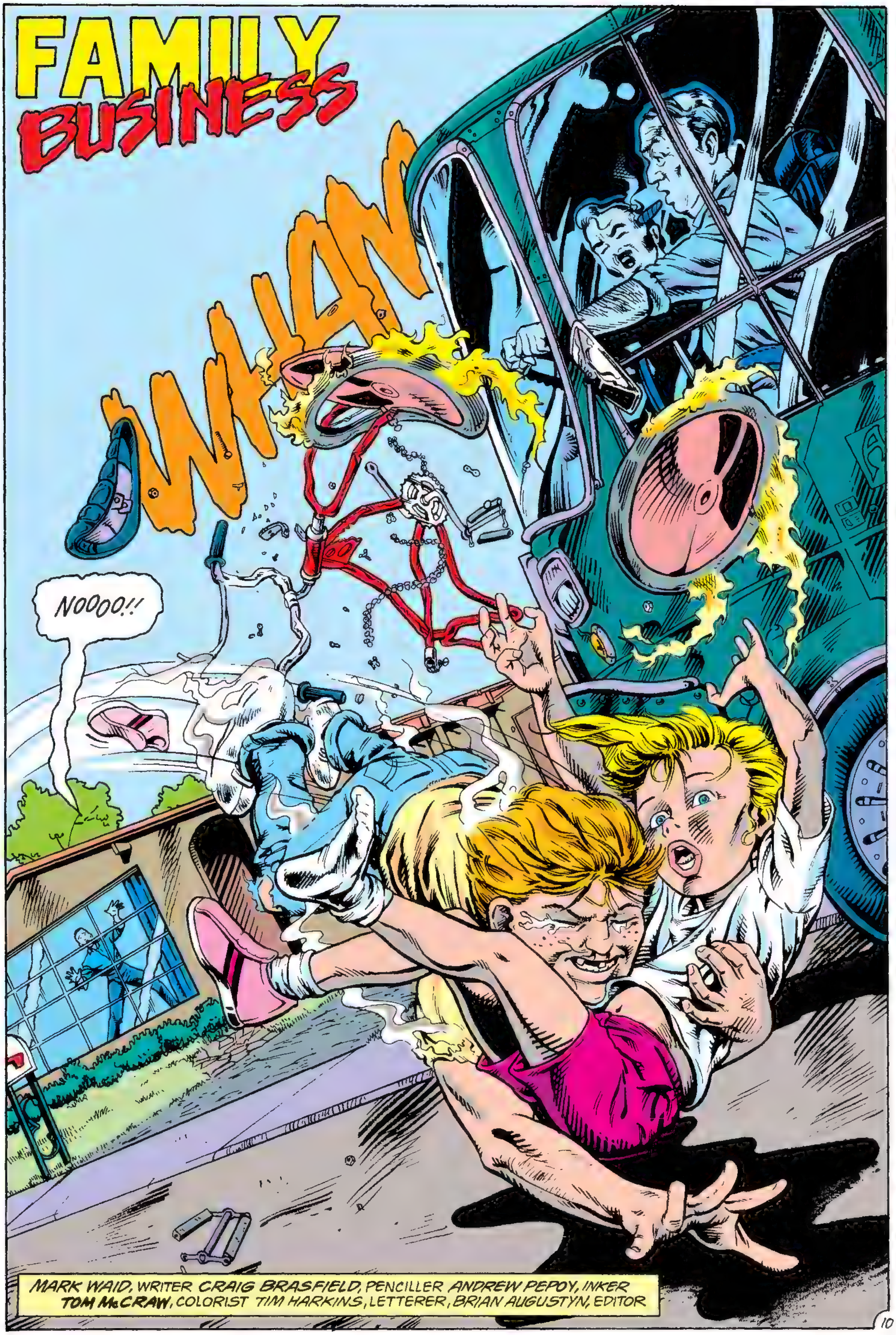
I THINK HE SAW YOU, MIKE. I REALLY DO.

I TOLD YOU, HE DIDN'T SEE ANYTHING.

STILL, YOU'RE RIGHT. I'LL SHUT THE CURT--!

9

FAMILY BUSINESS



MARK WAID, WRITER CRAIG BRASFIELD, PENCILLER ANDREW PEPOY, INKER
TOM McCRAW, COLORIST TIM HARKINS, LETTERER, BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITOR

10

hunh...hunh... hunh...

WHAT THE HELL WAS *THAT*? DID YOU *HIT* HER?

I DON'T *KNOW*! I DON'T *KNOW*! I THOUGHT THERE WAS *ANOTHER* KID!

4 ACE

VING COMPANY

IRST IN ARIZONA"

555-1432

I'M *SURE* THERE WAS!

SO WHERE DID HE *GO*?

SHHH...SHHH... IT'S *ALL RIGHT*, DAVID! DADDY'S HERE!

hunh! hunh!

IT'S GOING TO BE *OKAY*.

PLEASE, GOD, DON'T MAKE ME A LIAR.

WHEN I WAS TEN, AN ELECTRICAL ACCIDENT GAVE ME SUPER SPEED AND AN INVISIBLE AURA. THE AURA PROTECTS ME FROM FRICTION, MUSCLE STRESS, AIRBORNE DEBRIS, AND OTHER HAZARDS.

GSTAFF
OSPITAL

DAVID INHERITED MY POWER... BUT NOT MY AURA.

HE DOESN'T DARE MOVE AT SUPER-SPEED. HE COULD BE SERIOUSLY HURT.

EMERGENCY ENTRANCE ONLY

CAUTION DO NOT STOP IN DOORWAY

IF HE WERE TO MOVE FAST ENOUGH... IT COULD KILL HIM.

A13

I THINK HE'S GONE INTO SHOCK! DO SOMETHING!

HELP ME! THERE WAS AN... AN ACCIDENT-- MY SON...!

MIKE? DAVID?

MRS. NEWMAN, WHAT'S WRONG? WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?

NO ONE REALLY KNOWS! JANIE WAS NEARLY RUN OVER, BUT SOME...THING SNATCHED HER AWAY JUST IN TIME, THANK GOD!

SOMETHING? SOMETHING LIKE WHAT?

I DON'T KNOW! I DON'T CARE! ALL I KNOW IS THAT IT WAS A MIRACLE--LIKE A BOLT FROM THE BLUE!

MRS. NEWMAN, WERE MY HUSBAND... OR MY SON INVOLVED? WERE THEY HERE?

NO, NEVER MIND.

MIKE... WALLY... WHEREVER YOU ARE, CALL ME. PLEASE.

13

I HATE BEING SCARED. I HATE *LIVING* SCARED.

AFTER NINE YEARS, YOU'D THINK WE'D BE USED TO LOOKING OVER OUR SHOULDERS. BUT WE'RE *NOT.*

Sunday AND THIS MONSTER

COMING THIS SUMMER

THE MOTION PICTURE

I MISS BEING WHO I *REALLY* AM. AND THOUGH HE NEVER *SAYS* SO, I KNOW WALLY DOES, TOO.

"AT LEAST HE WENT OUT WITH A BANG."

14

YOU CAN'T JUDGE A BOOK...

DIOGENES -- Philanthropist turned crimelord -- and his son, Matthew (inset.) Are

"I DID THE RIGHT THING, YOU BASTARD AND NOW YOU CAN'T TOUCH ME. YOU DON'T KNOW ME."

ENTER TH... HO... SHOP CON... $$$

"THE WOMAN YOU KNEW WAS NAMED BONNIE BLACKMON."

MATTHEW DIOGENES

"I'D ONLY JUST MOVED TO KEYSTONE CITY. AN AGENCY SENT ME TO WORK FOR DIOGENES INDUSTRIES. THEY SAID IT WAS A COMMODITIES BROKERAGE."

"TWO WEEKS IN, I STUMBLED ON TO SOME PAPERS I WASN'T SUPPOSED TO SEE."

"I DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO. PART OF ME JUST WANTED TO FORGET IT, AND PART OF ME THOUGHT I SHOULD DO SOMETHING."

"I TOOK A WALK AND PRAYED FOR SOME SORT OF GUIDANCE."

"AND I RAN INTO WALLY. I'D NEVER MET HIM, BUT I KNEW WHO THE FLASH WAS AND WHAT HE STOOD FOR. BEFORE I REALIZED IT, I WAS TELLING HIM EVERYTHING."

"WE DID SOME FURTHER INVESTIGATING... AND DISCOVERED THAT I'D BEEN WORKING FOR THE BIGGEST SYNDICATE BOSS IN THE MIDWEST."

15

"WALLY UNCOVERED DIOGENES' SECRET, THE ONE THAT MADE HIM KING OF THE UNDERWORLD. DIOGENES, IT TURNED OUT, HAD A SUPER-POWER HIMSELF."

"IT WAS HIS TOUCH. ANYONE DIOGENES MADE CONTACT WITH BECAME AN OPEN BOOK TO HIM. HE ABSORBED THEIR MEMORIES, ZEROING IN ON THEIR FEARS, THEIR GOALS... AND THEIR DARKEST SECRETS."

"WITH THAT KIND OF INFORMATION AT HIS DISPOSAL, HE AND HIS SON, MATTHEW, COULD MOTIVATE AND MANIPULATE MEN FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN THEMSELVES WITH EASE."

"WALLY FINALLY CAPTURED THEM BUT NOT BEFORE DIOGENES NEARLY TOOK OVER THE ENTIRE CITY BY BRINGING TOGETHER AN ARMY OF WALLY'S ENEMIES."

"WORKING TOGETHER, WALLY AND I MANAGED TO PUT DIOGENES AND HIS SON AWAY FOR LIFE."

"WE ALSO MANAGED TO FALL IN LOVE."

"I WASN'T WORRIED ABOUT THE CONSEQUENCES OF TESTIFYING. AFTER ALL, DIOGENES KNEW NOTHING ABOUT ME."

"I COULD GO LIVE SOMEWHERE ELSE UNTIL THE HEAT DIED DOWN--WITH MY FOLKS, OR MAYBE WITH MY SISTER IN VIRGINIA. I'D BE SAFE."

16

LISTEN-- YOU KIDS ARE JUST DOING WHAT YOU THINK IS *RIGHT* HERE. I *RESPECT* THAT.

BY THE WAY, MS. BLACKMON... GIVE MY LOVE TO YOUR *SISTER* IN *VIRGINIA*.

"WALLY TRIED TO PROTECT ME, BUT HE UNDERESTIMATED DIOGENES' NETWORK OF REVENGE. MY FATHER WAS THREATENED, MY BROTHER BEATEN."

"ON THE DAY OF OUR WEDDING, WALLY'S MOTHER WAS KILLED."

"SO I GOT US INTO THE GOVERNMENT'S WITNESS PROTECTION PROGRAM. WALLY AND BONNIE WEST BECAME DIANE EDWARDS... AND THE FLASH WENT INTO RETIREMENT."

FRAGILE

BOOKS

"WALLY INSISTED THAT IT WASN'T HIS STYLE-- IT WAS JUST TEMPORARY. HE SAID HE'D RESURRECT THE FLASH ONCE HE FELT SURE I WAS SAFE."

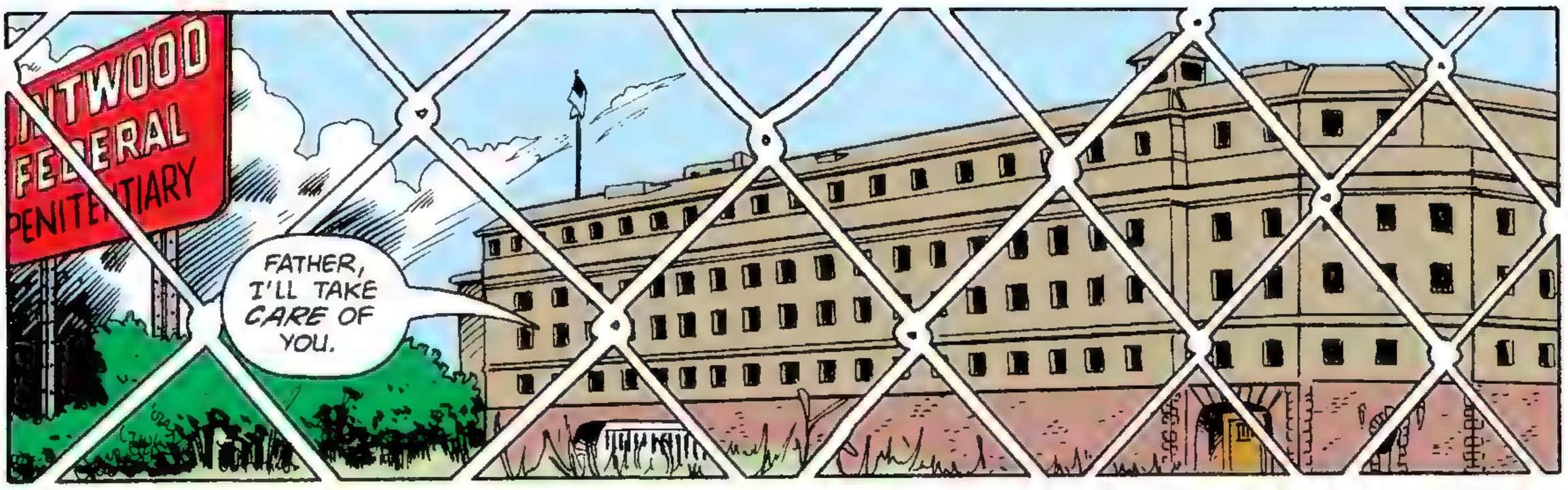
"THEN OUR SON WAS BORN. I'D HAD TROUBLE PICTURING WALLY AS A FATHER, BUT MY FEARS WERE UNJUSTIFIED. OVERNIGHT, DAVID BECAME THE CENTER OF HIS WORLD-- AND THE FLASH BECAME A MEMORY."

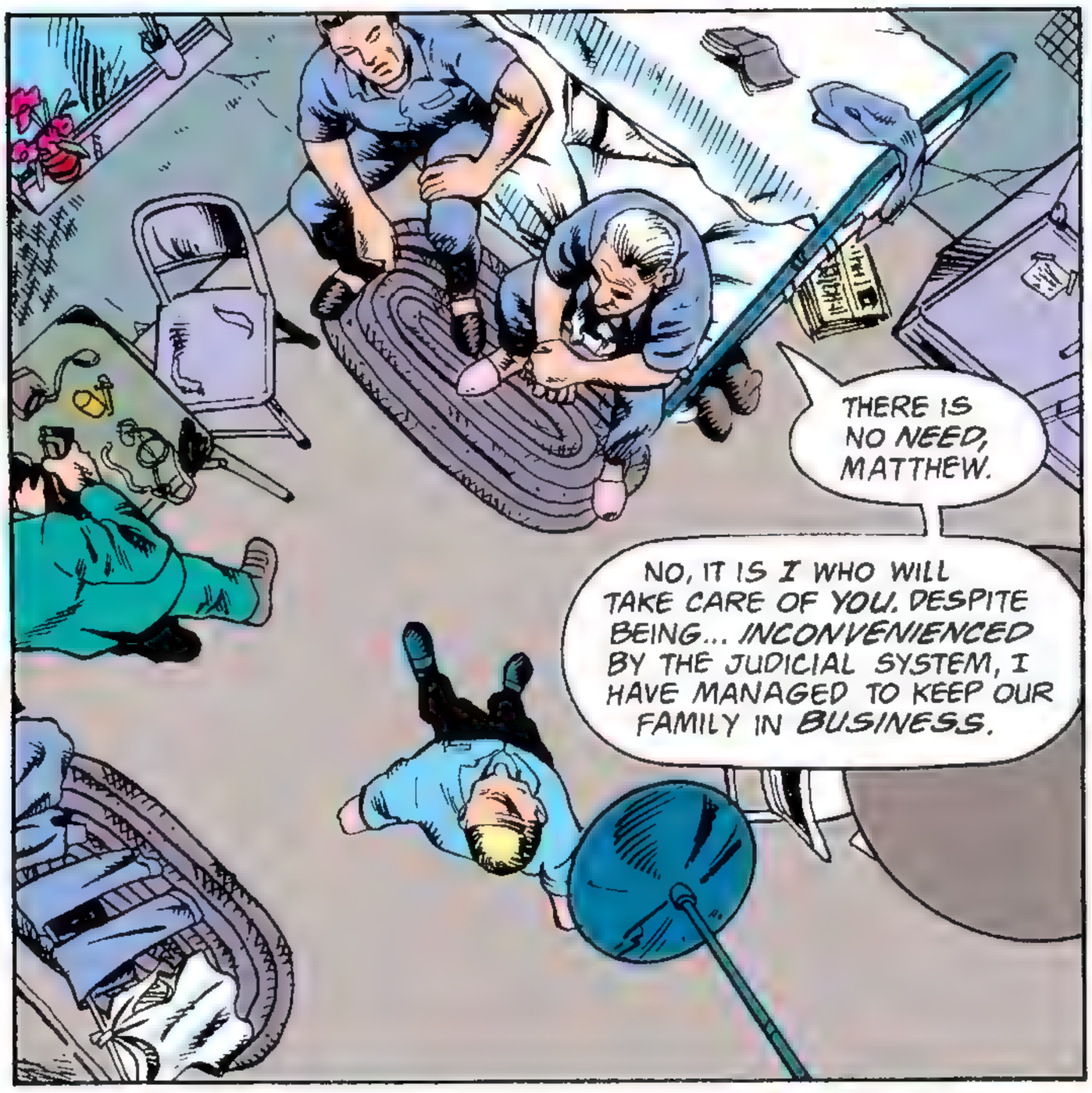
BEEP BEEP

HELLO ? SWEETHEART ?

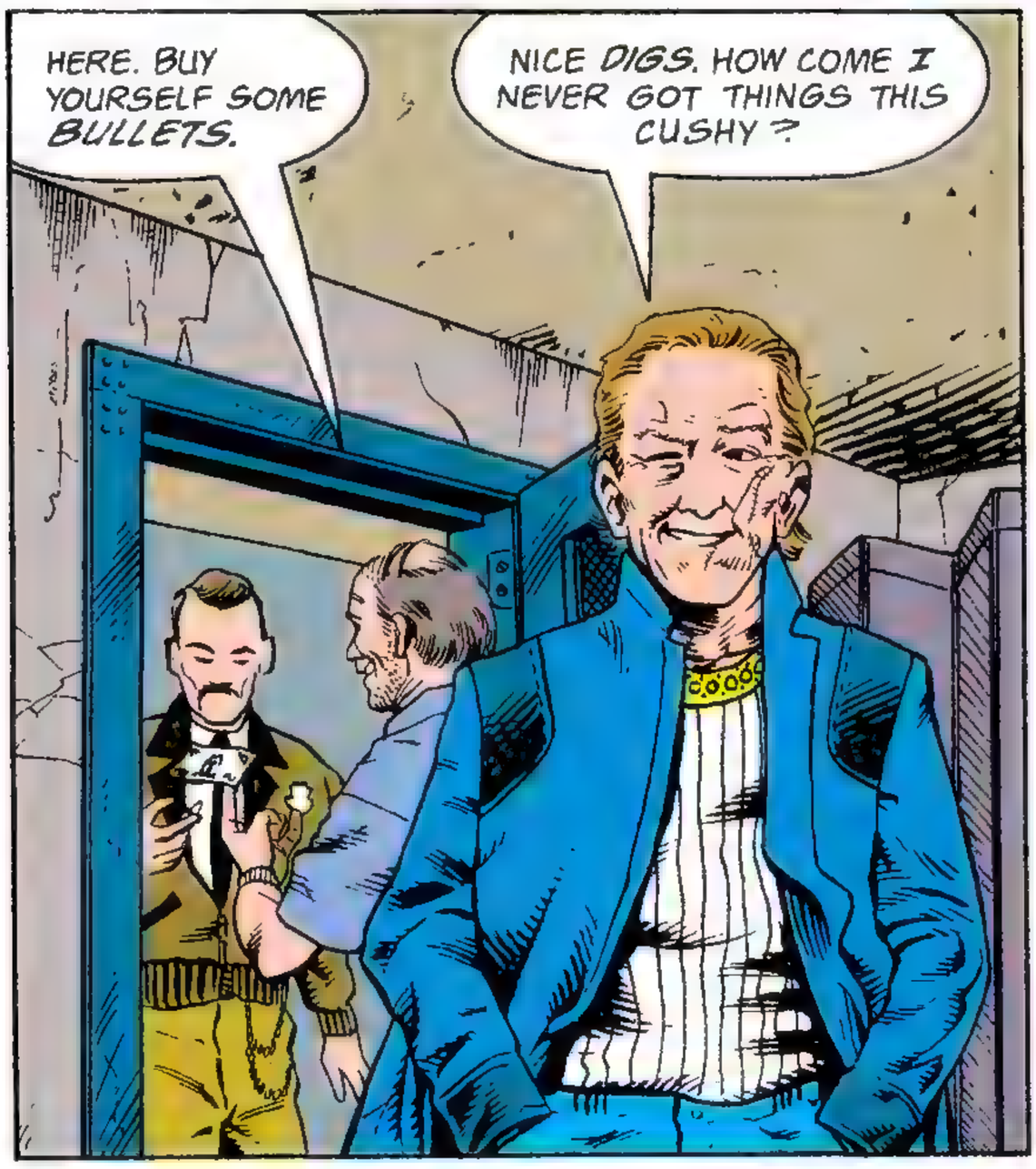
OH, GOD. HANG ON. I'M ON MY WAY.

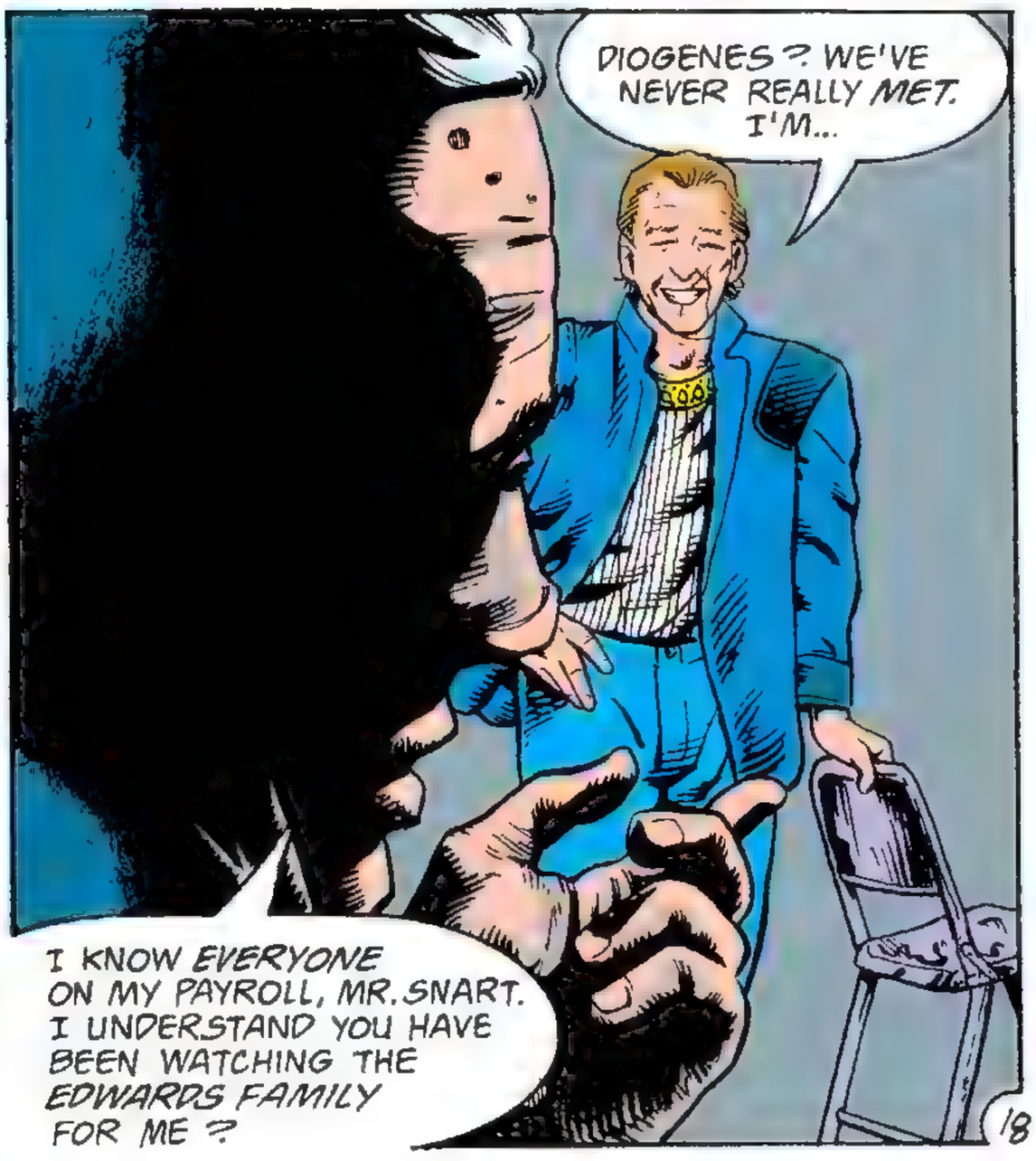
17


FATHER, I'LL TAKE CARE OF YOU.


THERE IS NO NEED, MATTHEW.
NO, IT IS I WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU. DESPITE BEING... INCONVENIENCED BY THE JUDICIAL SYSTEM, I HAVE MANAGED TO KEEP OUR FAMILY IN BUSINESS.

I AM NOT WELL. MY TIME IS COMING SOON.
BUT I WILL LEAVE YOU WITH THE POWER YOU WILL NEED TO MAINTAIN CONTROL. THAT IS MY PROMISE.


HERE. BUY YOURSELF SOME BULLETS.
NICE DIGS. HOW COME I NEVER GOT THINGS THIS CUSHY?


DIOGENES? WE'VE NEVER REALLY MET. I'M...
I KNOW EVERYONE ON MY PAYROLL, MR. SNART. I UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE BEEN WATCHING THE EDWARDS FAMILY FOR ME?
18

YES, SIR-- AND I HAVE GOOD NEWS. IT'S THEM. I'M SURE OF IT. I SAW...

I KNOW WHAT YOU SAW, LEONARD. TRUST ME.

AND I TRUST YOU. YOU'VE DONE WELL.

NOW YOU'RE WONDERING ABOUT COMPENSATION, LEONARD. DON'T TELL ME. LET ME SEE IF I CAN GUESS WHAT YOU WANT.

I THINK THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE RELOCATED. I UNDERSTAND YOUR SISTER IS HUNTING FOR YOU, AND THAT MAKES YOU NERVOUS.

YOU'VE ALWAYS WANTED TO LIVE IN SWITZERLAND, HAVEN'T YOU, LEONARD?

. Weather Wizard
. Rainbow Raider
. Golden Glider *
. Sloe
. Teddy

I'LL BE DAMNED. YOU REALLY ARE AMAZING.

YOU FLATTER ME, LEONARD. I SIMPLY KNOW PEOPLE. DO ONE MORE THING FOR ME, AND I WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU.

THESE ARE SOME OF YOUR FORMER ASSOCIATES. CONTACT THEM FOR ME...

... DO NOT WORRY ABOUT YOUR SISTER-- WE WILL FIND HER...

... AND TELL THEM I WOULD LIKE THEIR HELP IN LEAVING THIS PLACE TOMORROW. WILL YOU DO THAT FOR ME, LEONARD?

YOU BET.

EXCELLENT. MATTHEW, THE SEARCH IS OVER. CALL IN OUR OTHER FIELD AGENTS. OH-- AND GET IN TOUCH WITH PARADOX.

TELL HIM WE WILL NEED MC GEE.

MR. AND MRS. EDWARDS, I WON'T *LIE* TO YOU. THOUGH IT'S BEEN SEVERAL DAYS, DAVID'S CONDITION IS STILL QUITE *SERIOUS*.

I WISH WE KNEW EXACTLY WHAT *HAPPENED* TO YOUR BOY BUT THAT'S NOT REALLY IMPORTANT.

WHAT *IS* IMPORTANT IS GETTING HIM THROUGH THE NEXT DAY OR TWO. IF WE CAN DO *THAT*, HE SHOULD BE *OKAY*.

MY HUSBAND SAID THERE WERE SOME *BURNS*...

THERE ARE. THERE MAY NEED TO BE SOME PLASTIC SURGERY, BUT THAT'S COMPARATIVELY SIMPLE IN THIS DAY AND AGE.

THERE WAS ALSO THE SHOCK AND THE LACERATIONS... AND BROKEN BONES.

EACH OF THESE INJURIES IS DEBILITATING *ENOUGH* TO A BOY THIS YOUNG-- *TOGETHER*, THEY NEARLY *KILLED* HIM.

NEVERTHELESS, HE'LL PULL *THROUGH* SO LONG AS HIS CONDITION REMAINS *STABLE*.

EDWARDS

R5

EDW

THANK YOU, DOCTOR.

oh...

YOU'RE GOING TO BE *OKAY*, DAVID. YOU DIDN'T COME THIS FAR...

20

REMEMBER WHEN WE FIRST FOUND OUT ? HE WAS TWO. HE TOOK OFF ACROSS THE YARD LIKE A ROCKET.

SURE DO. I HAD TO RUN FULL OUT JUST TO KEEP UP WITH HIM.

IT WAS FUNNY AND FRIGHTENING AT THE SAME TIME. IF ONLY IT HAD STAYED FUNNY.

I KNOW. ONE DAY, HE WAS AN ORDINARY KID-- THE NEXT HE HAD TO BE WATCHED AROUND THE CLOCK TO KEEP HIM FROM HURTING HIMSELF.

YOU STAYED WITH HIM EVERY WAKING MOMENT, TRAINING HIM AND TEACHING HIM CONTROL. WHEN I LOOK BACK AND THINK ABOUT WHAT YOU GAVE UP...

IT'S ALL RIGHT.

HE'S MY SON.

WHY DON'T YOU LIE DOWN ? I'LL KEEP AN EYE ON HIM. YOU HEARD THE DOCTOR--THE WORST OF IT IS OVER.

NO SMOKING

PAGING MR. WALLY WEST...

... WILL MR. WALLY WEST PLEASE PICK UP A RED COURTESY PHONE ? MR. WALLY WEST.

WHO IS THIS ?

OLLY, OLLY, OXEN FREE.

WHO ARE YOU ? THIS... MUST BE SOME MISTAKE...

THERE IS NO MISTAKE, MR. WEST.

YOU KNOW WHO I AM. I KNOW WHO YOU ARE. YOU MUST KNOW THAT I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU FOR SOME TIME.

WHAT DO YOU WANT, DIOGENES? DO YOU WANT ME? IS THAT IT ?

ACTUALLY, NO. I WANT THE FLASH.

THE *FLASH* IS *GONE*. HE'S BEEN GONE FOR *SOME TIME*. EVEN *YOU* MUST KNOW *THAT* MUCH.

TRUE. STILL, I THINK YOU COULD TURN HIM UP IF YOU *TRIED* HARD ENOUGH. OR IF YOU HAD THE PROPER *MOTIVATION*.

I WON'T BE BLACKMAILED, DIOGENES.

WRONG.

KRASH

KLIK

THERE. THE GLIDER AND THE OTHERS WILL BRING THE BOY HERE BEFORE MANNING THEIR STATIONS.

YES, SIR. THEY'LL ALSO PICK UP THEIR *ARMAMENTS.*

SOME OF THEM EXPRESSED *DISDAIN* FOR THESE DEVICES. YOU'RE CERTAIN THAT EACH OF THEM WILL FOLLOW YOUR ORDERS TO THE LETTER?

I TOOK GREAT PAINS TO SELECT AGENTS WHOSE MEAGER AMBITIONS ARE COMMENSURATE WITH THEIR MEAGER TALENTS. THEY ARE *COGS* AND WILL *PERFORM* AS SUCH.

KEYSTONE CITY
PROD. 47R

HOW CAN YOU BE CERTAIN WEST WILL FOLLOW THE PATTERN WE HAVE SET?

OUR AGENTS HAVE RECEIVED THEIR INDIVIDUAL *POSTHYPNOTIC SUGGESTIONS.* WHEN THEY HEAR *MY NAME,* THEY WILL =KOFF= WILL--

FATHER, THERE IS STILL SOME TIME FOR YOU TO *REST.* LET ME CHECK IN ON *PARADOX.*

24

=KOFF=! I'LL DO IT. HE'S OF *TWO MINDS* WHEN IT COMES TO YOU.

PARADOX, DO WE HAVE *MC GEE?*

JUST *ABOUT*, BOSS. YOU DIDN'T MENTION THAT WE'D HAVE TO WORK AROUND SOME *500-POUND GUY*, THOUGH.

IS THAT A *PROBLEM?*

a *PROBLEM?* it was the *best part!*

I SAID WE SHOULD *ACCELERATE* HIS *METABOLISM.*

and I SUGGESTED WE do it *ONE LIMB* at a *TIME.*

tHat was FUN.

YOU DON'T *UNDERSTAND!* WE CAN'T *HELP* YOU! IT'S BEEN *TEN YEARS* SINCE WE'VE SEEN WALLY! EVEN *WE* DON'T KNOW WHERE HE IS NOW!

THAT'S OKAY. *WE* DO.

BANK of KEYSTONE

S.T.A.R.

THEN WHAT GOOD ARE *WE* TO *YOU?*

ASK YOUR *HUSBand.* hE'S been *Building* tHINGS for us.

JERRY, WHAT'S HE *TALKING* ABOUT?

GOD, TINA-- THEY PROMISED ME YOU WOULDN'T FIND *OUT*... NOT *THIS* WAY...

YOU DID SOMETHING TO GET BACK AT *WALLY*! YOU *ALWAYS* HATED HIM!

NO--I ALWAYS *LOVED YOU*. TINA, THEY SAID IF I DIDN'T *COOPERATE*, THEY'D... THEY'D *TAKE YOU* AND...

TINA, FORGIVE ME.

YEAH, YEAH, YEAH. COME *ON*, JERRY. GOTTA SEE A *MAN* ABOUT A *MACHINE*.

WAIT! *SHE* DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO WORK THE EQUIPMENT! LEAVE HER *HERE*!

SAY, MAYBE WE *SHOULD*. OTHERWISE, WHAT *GOOD* IS SHE?

ARE YOU *KIDDING*?

SHE MAKES GREAT *INSURANCE*.

KRASH

IT'S TIME.

7:58

I HAVE TO GO.

7:58

WHEN YOU ENTER WITNESS PROTECTION, YOU'RE ASKED TO GET RID OF EVERYTHING THAT LINKS YOU TO YOUR FORMER LIFE.

"MY FORMER LIFE IS GONE," I ALWAYS SAID. "I DON'T EVEN HAVE ANY MORE UNIFORMS. I COULDN'T GO BACK IF I WANTED TO."

THAT'S WHAT I SAID. BUT DEEP DOWN IN MY HEART, I KNEW IT WASN'T TRUE.

WHAT GOES AROUND COMES AROUND. LIKE A CIRCLE.

LIKE A RING.

Keystone STADIUM
CENTRAL CITY STARS
VS
GOTHAM KNIGHTS

TONIGHT... TON

NOW BATTING FOR THE GOTHAM KNIGHTS... NUMBER 15... MIKE FRIEDMAN!

AND IT'S A LONG FLY BALL OUT TO CENTER FIELD!

TURN 23

KRAK

GOODBYE, MR. SPAULDING! IF VOZZO MISSES THIS CATCH, THE STARS TAKE A BIG LEAD IN TONIGHT'S GAME!

360

KNIGHT

BA-KOW!

KNIGHT

VOZZO 20

FORGET IT, VOZ.

I'VE GOT TWENTY ON THE STARS.

29

IT'S OVER, FOLKS! GO ON HOME! THIS GAME IS CALLED...

...ON ACCOUNT OF WEATHER! AH HA HA HA!

KA-BOK!

BZZAAT!

ZZHAAT!

IT'S GOING... GOING... GONE! WHAMMO!

GOD, I LOVE BASEBALL.

HEY, HEY! COULD IT BE...?

OOOF! IT IS!

KRASH!

NO JOKES.

JUST TELL ME WHERE MY SON IS.

BAP

POW

SORRY-- THAT'S NOT IN TONIGHT'S FORECAST!

XZAAK!

WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT?

IT LOOKED AS IF IT SHOULD HAVE DONE SOME DAMAGE... BUT I'M FINE.

IF YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO TAKE ME OUT WITH THAT, WIZARD-- YOU FAILED!

BUT THEN...

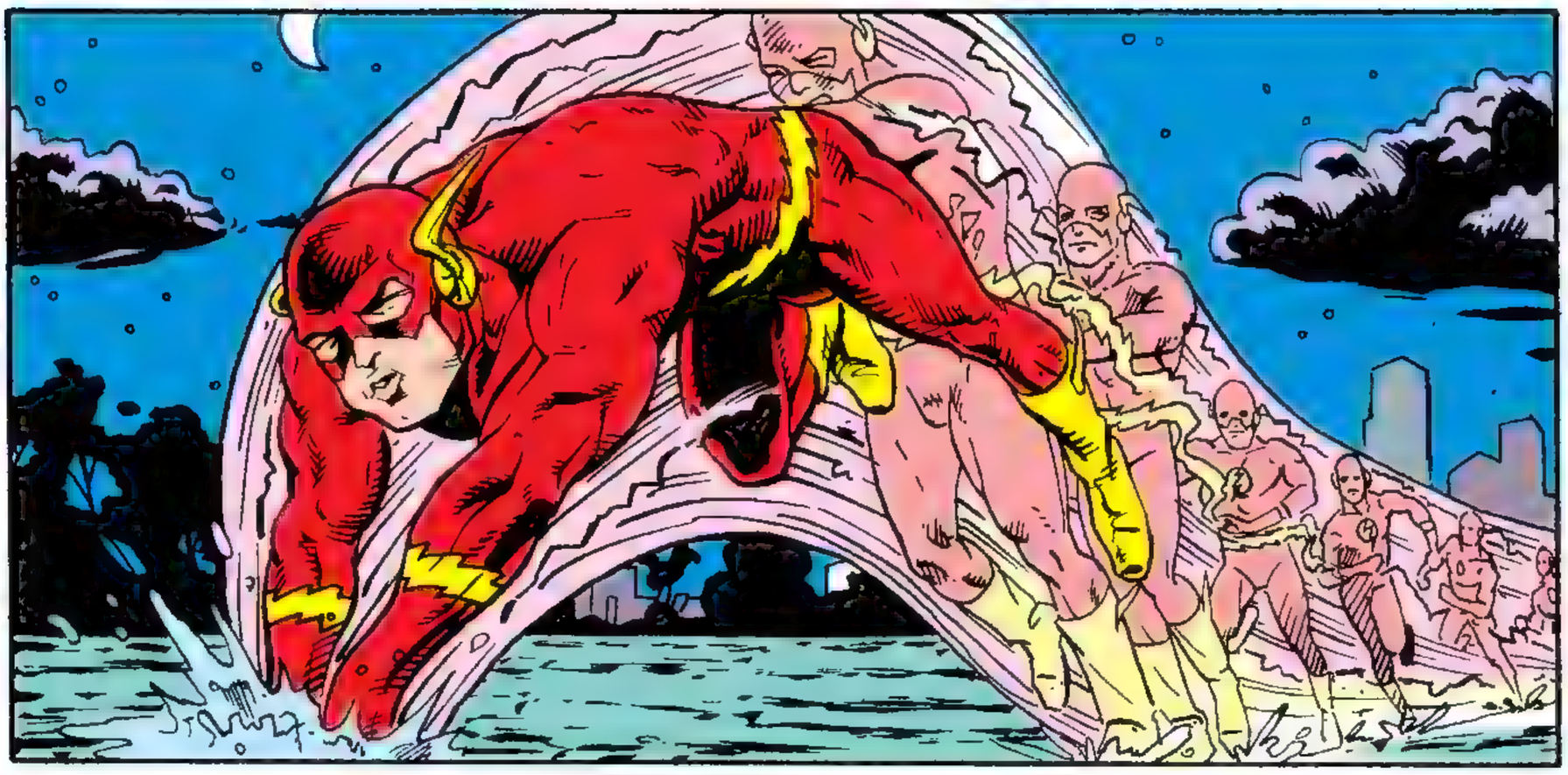
KRAK! KRAK! KRAK! KRAK!

UNNF!
OOOF!
UNNF!
...I EXPECT FAILURE FROM A LOSER LIKE YOU.
I ASK HIM ONE LAST TIME.
I... I DON'T...
WHERE'S MY BOY, MARDON?
WHERE'S DIOGENES?
I DON'T LIKE WHAT I HEAR.
KEYSTONE FUSION. HE WAITS. HE WAITS. HE WAITS.
DAMN DIOGENES. I DIDN'T COME HERE TO PLAY GAMES, BUT THIS IS THE ONLY LEAD I'VE GOT. NOTHING TO DO BUT SEE WHERE IT TAKES ME.
I SMELL A RAT... ONE THAT WANTS ME TO RUN HIS MAZE.
32

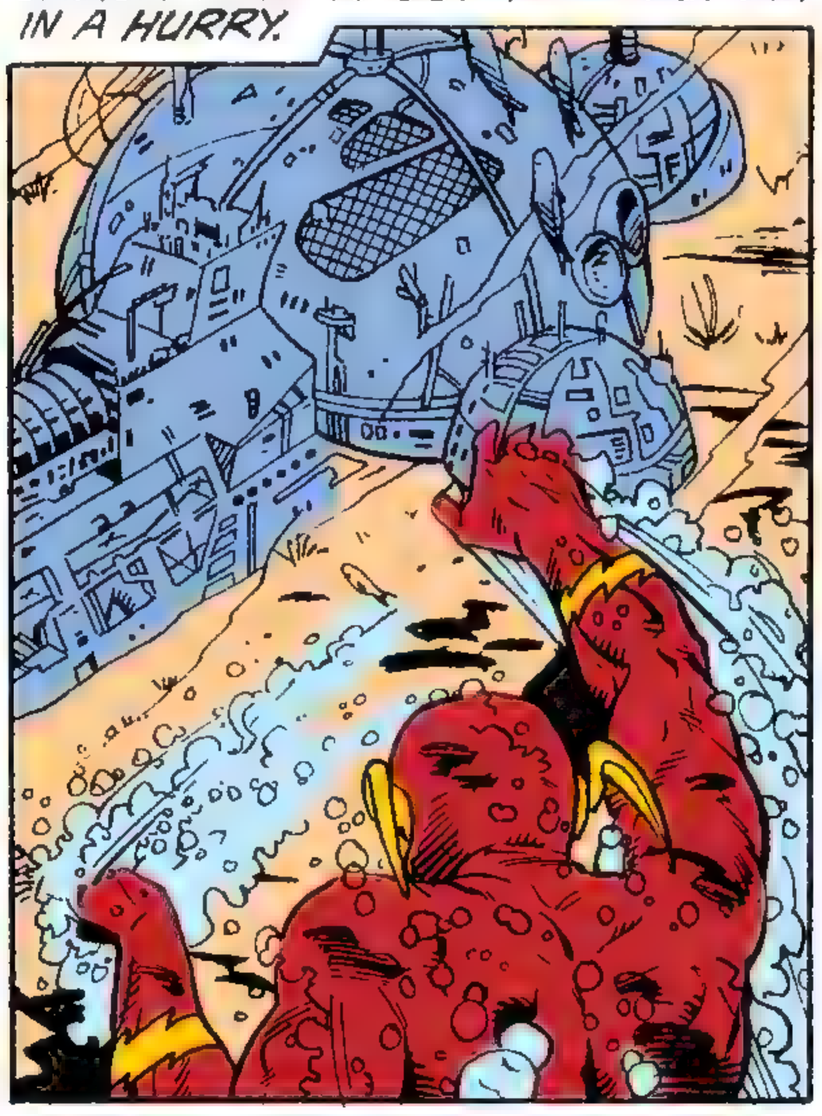
WHEN I WAS A KID, I FIGURED THE YEAR 2001 WOULD BE A TIME OF LUNAR CITIES AND FLYING CARS.

WE'RE NOT THERE YET. SCIENCE ONLY RECENTLY PERFECTED AN ENERGY SOURCE CLEAN ENOUGH TO MOVE US IN THAT DIRECTION SAFELY.

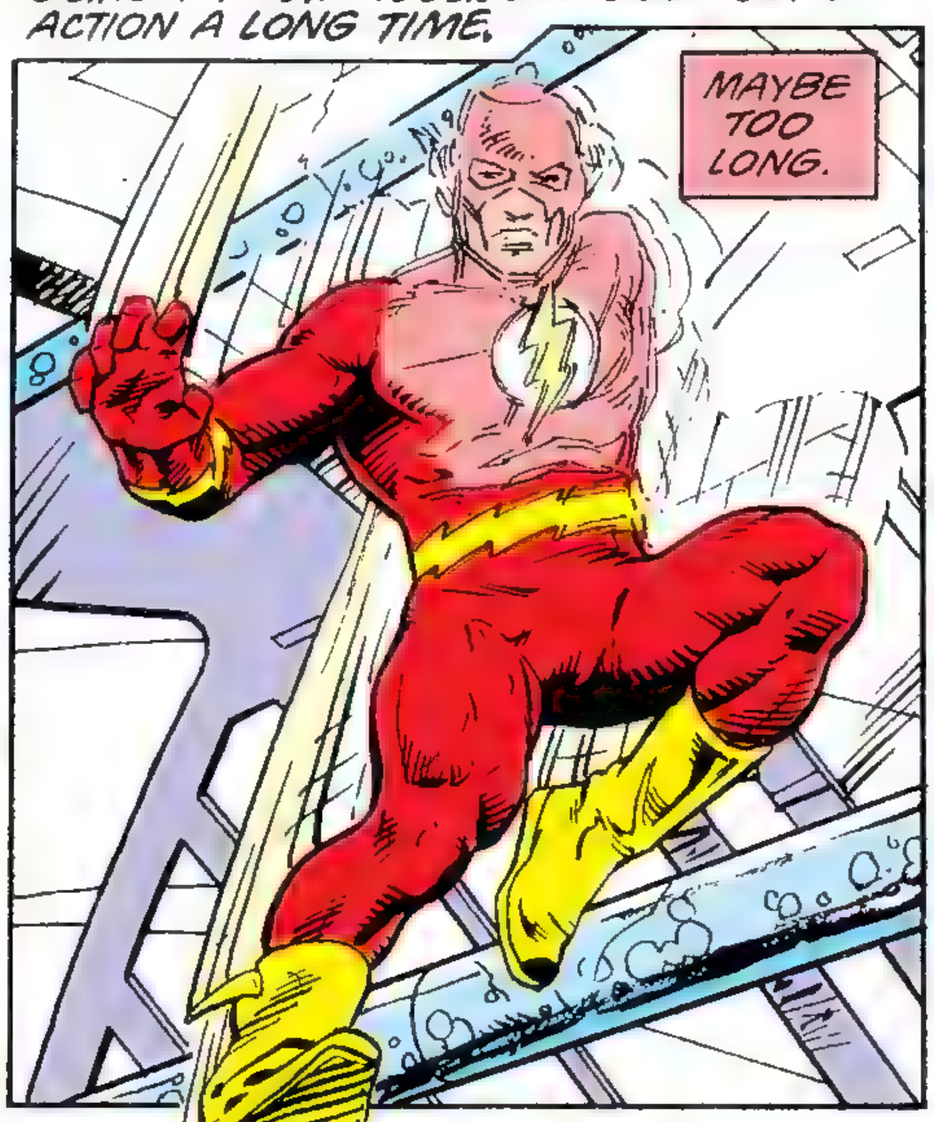
WOOOOSH



IN '98, S.T.A.R. LABS BUILT AN ENORMOUS COLD FUSION FACILITY UNDERNEATH LAKE KEYSTONE. THERE ARE PROBABLY EASIER WAYS TO GET TO IT... BUT I'M IN A HURRY.



STRANGE. I GOT FAST ENOUGH TO VIBRATE THROUGH WALLS AGAIN JUST BEFORE I RETIRED... BUT I DON'T REMEMBER IT BEING THIS DIFFICULT. I'VE BEEN OUT OF ACTION A LONG TIME.



I DON'T BELIEVE FOR AN INSTANT THAT DIOGENES BROUGHT DAVID HERE.

HE OBVIOUSLY WANTS ME TO FIND SOMETHING ELSE... OR FOR SOMETHING ELSE TO FIND ME.

33

AGAIN WITH THE RAYGUNS... AND AGAIN, NO EFFECT.

MORE SECOND-STRINGERS-- SLOE AND STEDDY, HIRED GUNS. THE TURTLE USED TO USE THEM UNTIL DR. ALCHEMY WENT NUTS AND TURNED HIM INTO A CLOUD OF MAGNESIUM.

NOW HE'S DUST IN THE WIND.

ME... I'M A STRAW IN A HURRICANE.

WATER COOLANT CRISS-CROSSES THIS WHOLE FACILITY. AT THIS DEPTH, THE PRESSURE'S REMARKABLE.

IT HITS THEM LIKE A FIRE HOSE.

DID YOU THINK YOU COULD HURT ME?

NO. WE'RE HERE TO *DISTRACT* YOU.

MR. SPRYNT WILL HURT YOU.

WHAM

34

I'D FORGOTTEN. THEY'D ALWAYS WORKED AS A TRIO.

SPRYNT, HOWEVER, WAS NEVER A SERIOUS THREAT. HIS STRENGTH IS IN HIS ELECTRICAL EXO-SKELETON... BUT SO IS HIS WEAKNESS.

WE GET THE BENDS FROM SURFACING SO QUICKLY. MY METABOLISM SHAKES THEM OFF IN AN INSTANT.

AAARGH!

I GAMBLED THAT SPRYNT WOULDN'T BE SO LUCKY.

I WON.

I ALSO LOST... BECAUSE WHEN I ASK ABOUT DIOGENES, SPRYNT FREEZES OVER AND RECITES A NEW ADDRESS.

WHAT IS HE UP TO? WHERE'S MY SON?

35

THAT'S TWO.

MATTHEW, GET INTO PLACE. PARADOX, BRING YOUR WEAPON OVER.

WHEN YOU ARE DONE, PARADOX, WE WILL HAVE WHAT WE NEED FROM WEST. WHATEVER HAPPENS TO HIM AFTERWARDS IS STRICTLY UP TO... THE TWO OF YOU.

HOLD IT JUST LIKE THIS AND PULL THE TRIGGER LIKE SO. WHEN YOU FIRE AT WALLY AND MAKE CONTACT, THE RESULTANT CHARGE WILL BE RELAYED BACK HERE. UNDERSTAND?

WAIT...

It's okay. I've got it.

I THINK ABOUT MY SON IN THE HANDS OF DIOGENES AND I GET PHYSICALLY ILL.

I RUN A WHOLE GAMUT OF EMOTIONS. ANGER, FEAR, FRUSTRATION... AND JUST THE TINIEST HINT OF ANOTHER FEELING THAT, UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES, SHAMES ME.

EXCITEMENT.

I CAN'T HELP IT. I THOUGHT I'D ADJUSTED TO BEING A NORMAL MAN IN A NORMAL WORLD. A SLOW WORLD.

A SAFE WORLD.

BUT TONIGHT I MOVE IN WAYS THAT NO ONE ELSE KNOWS, AT SPEEDS THAT NO ONE ELSE CAN IMAGINE... AND NOTHING CAN HOLD ME BACK. MAYBE...

SHOVE IT AWAY. DON'T THINK ABOUT IT. THINK ABOUT DAVID.

HE NEEDS YOU.

ONE WAY
WOOD ST.
KENDRICK
NO PARKING ANY TIME

37

PEOPLE OF KEYSTONE CITY!

YOU CLAIM THAT TODAY'S WORLD IS COLD AND GRAY. AND YOU'RE RIGHT!

YOUR WORLD IS DRAB AND DREARY, PALE AND PALLID.

IT'S TIME THE RAINBOW RAIDER PUT SOME COLOR BACK INTO IT!

LOVELY, LOVELY COLOR... HA-HA-HA!

38

THE RAINBOW RAIDER. ANOTHER OF DIOGENES' BLASTS FROM THE PAST.

YOU MANIAC! YOU'RE THROWING THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE INTO A PANIC--

KZAAK

=UNNGH!=

THAT ONE HURT.

BUT NOT ENOUGH TO LET HIM GET AWAY.

OH, MY! YOU'RE ABSOLUTELY RIGHT, FLASH! THESE PEOPLE DON'T LOOK HAPPY AT ALL!

WHY, I WOULDN'T BE SURPRISED IF THEY STARTED TO SEE RED!

AS FOR ME... WELL, COLOR ME GONE!

39

HE'S COUNTING ON MY RELUCTANCE TO VIBRATE THROUGH PEOPLE TO PUT SOME DISTANCE BETWEEN US. STILL, HE CAN'T GET FAR. INVISIBLE OR NOT.

... HE HAS TO BE SOMEWHERE.

BASH

THEY'RE STILL UNDER YOUR SPELL, RAIDER. PUT THEM BACK IN THEIR RIGHT MINDS, OR YOU'RE GOING DOWN WITH ME.

I...

DO IT.-

HE GIVES ME ANOTHER BOGUS ADDRESS AND I'M ON ANOTHER WILD GOOSE CHASE. AND ALL I CAN DO IS PRAY I REACH THE END OF IT IN TIME.

673

BEGIN *RECORDING.*

HERE AT *KEYSTONE AIRPORT,* THE U.S.S. *WAYNE* TOUCHES DOWN FOLLOWING ANOTHER TWO-MAN *SATELLITE DEPLOYMENT!* DESCRIBED BY SHUTTLE PILOT *CAPTAIN DRAKE* AS A *MILK RUN,* THE ROUTINE MISSION--

KLD

KLD

HOLD IT! THIS REPORTER SIGHTS TWO *UNAUTHORIZED VISITORS* ENTERING THE LANDING AREA!

NO ONE SEEMS TO KNOW WHAT THEY'RE *UP TO,* BUT--

--GOOD LORD.

WAYNE

FWAASH

GROUND CONTROL, THIS IS *DRAKE!* *MAYDAY!*

MAYDAY! DO YOU *READ?* WE'RE *OUT OF CONTROL!!* WE NEED *HELP--* AND *FAST!*

ALIS

41

WHOOM!

NOT BAD. YOU KNOW, LOVERBOY, I'VE BROKEN IN MANY A... BEGINNER IN MY TIME, AND TAKE IT FROM ME-- YOU'VE GOT THE RIGHT STUFF!

I LIVE TO SERVE, BABE.

MMMM-- TELL ME MORE...

POOR LEN SNART.

HE GOES STRAIGHT AND CONVINCES HIS SISTER LISA TO DO THE SAME.

THEN ONE DAY, OUT OF THE BLUE, SHE DECIDES SHE MISSES BEING THE GOLDEN GLIDER.

WHEN LEN REFUSES TO GIVE UP THE GOOD LIFE, SHE SLICES HIM UP, STEALS HIS EQUIPMENT, LEAVES HIM FOR DEAD AND STARTS FINDING NEW PARTNERS.

YOUNG PARTNERS.

42

THIS ONE'S NUMBER SIX.

WHO'S YOUR FRIEND, LISA -- THE NEW CAPTAIN COLD?

THE NAME'S CHILLBLAINE, SPEEDO--

OOOF!

AAAARGH!

SMASH!

BP!

HOW...? I SHOULD HAVE BEEN ABLE TO VIBRATE THROUGH THAT, OR DODGE IT.

SUDDENLY I REALIZE THE SECRET BEHIND THOSE RAYGUNS. THEIR EFFECT IS CUMULATIVE.

THEY'RE SLOWING ME DOWN.

ZZKKRRIPP!

THEY'RE NOT GOING TO STOP ME, THOUGH.

WHUMP

43

SHE'S NOT GOING TO TELL ME ANYTHING. I FIGURE I HAVE TO WAKE HER BOYFRIEND.

UNFORTUNATELY, HE'S AHEAD OF ME.

STUPID. STUPID.!

KZAAK!

HE HIT ME WITH A DOUBLE DOSE. NOW I'M BARELY QUICK ENOUGH TO GET THE JUMP ON HIM. DAMN IT.!

HEY.! THAT'S MY GUN.!

IT'S GOING TO BE YOUR HEAD IN A SECOND. NOW WHERE DOES DIOGENES WANT ME TO GO THIS TIME ?

BAF

I LUMBER OFF. THE AIR AROUND ME FEELS LIKE MOLASSES.

I MUST BE NEARING THE END OF THIS GAUNTLET. I DON'T HAVE MUCH MORE SPEED TO STEAL.

ANOTHER SIGN OF THE ON-GOING RECESSION... ONE OF KEYSTONE'S HALF-EMPTY OFFICE BUILDINGS.

ALL NIGHT I'VE BEEN UP AGAINST OLD FOES. MOST OF THEM WERE NEVER MUCH MORE THAN A NUISANCE.

THIS ONE'S DIFFERENT. THIS ONE'S A KILLER.

ABOUT TIME HE MADE IT.

LIGHTEN UP. HE'S NOT HIMSELF TONIGHT... AH HA HA HA HA!

PARADOX IS A LIVING CONTRADICTION. BY SCATTERING THE SAND IN HIS STAFF, HE CAN MAKE THE ONE CONSTANT IN THE UNIVERSE -- TIME ITSELF -- MOVE FASTER OR SLOWER.

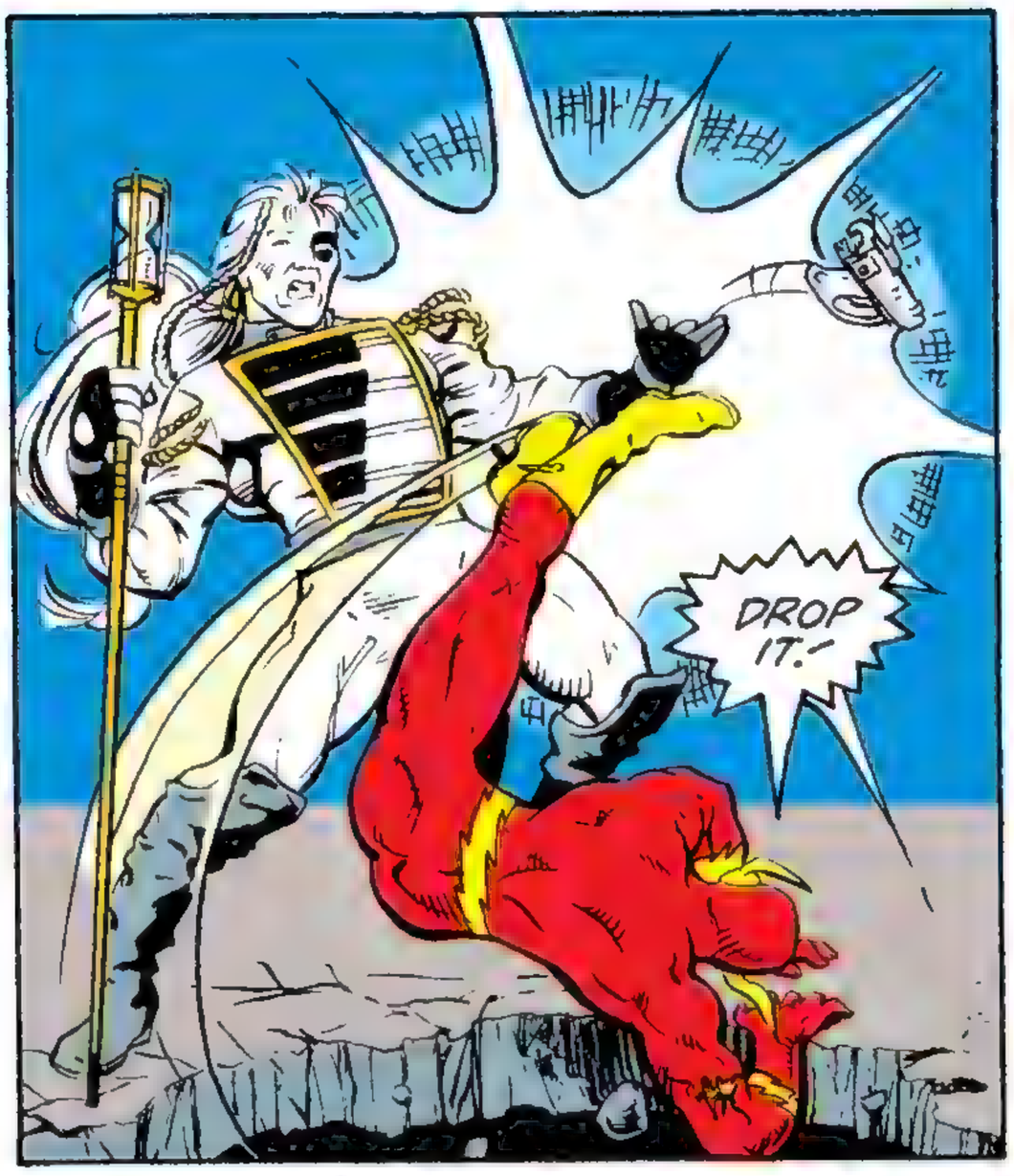
THE FLOOR...!

SHODDY WORKMANSHIP. SURE, IT LOOKS GOOD NOW...

SKRITCH

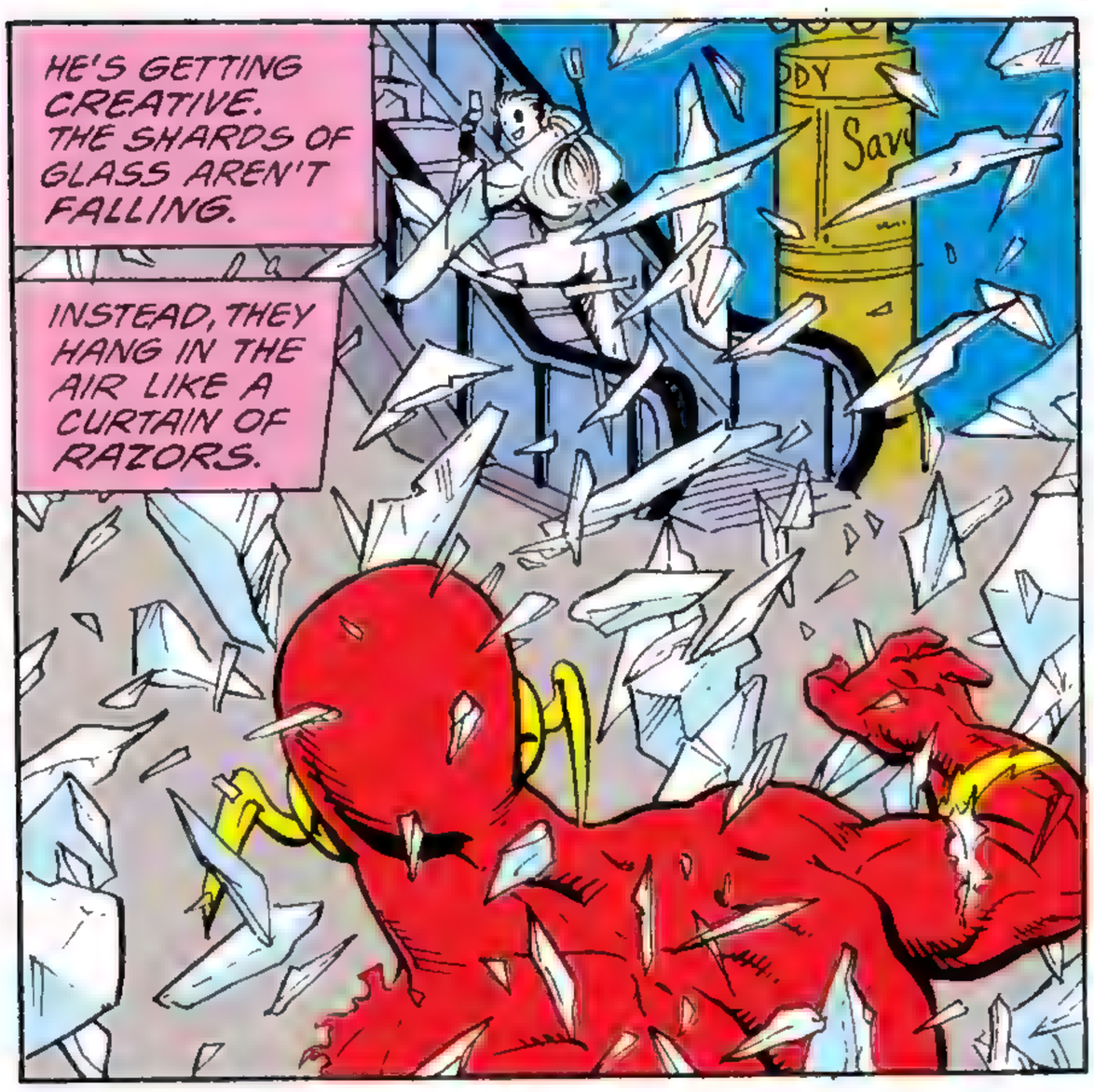
...BUT IT WON'T AGE WELL!

95

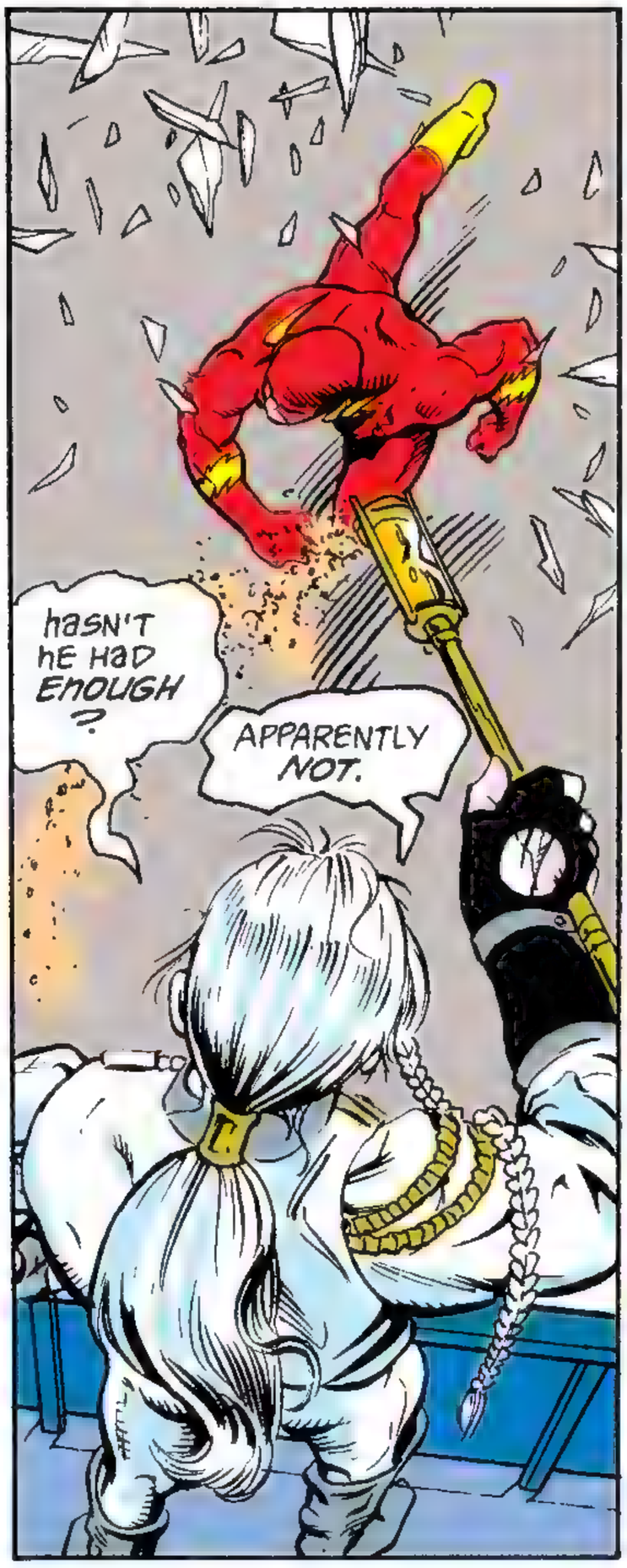

DROP IT.-

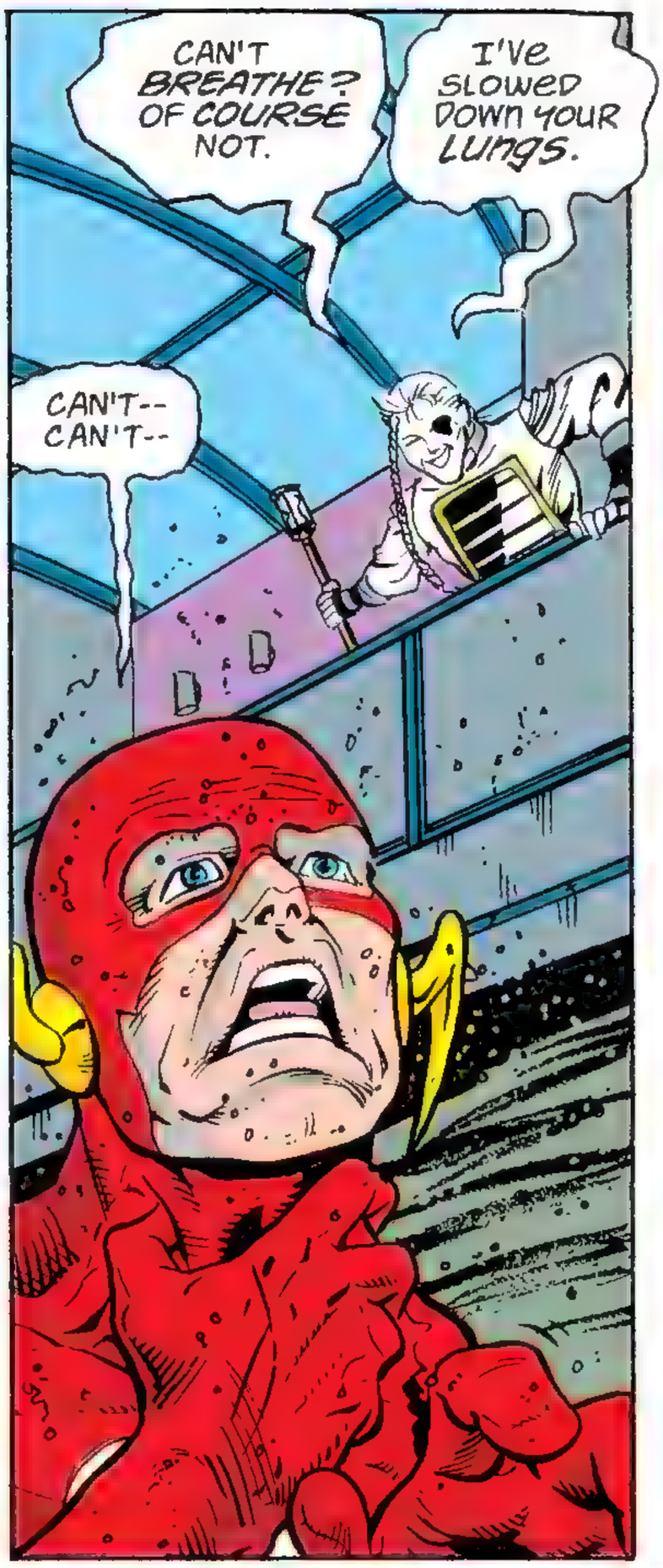
THERE. SO MUCH FOR THE GUN. NOW WHAT ?

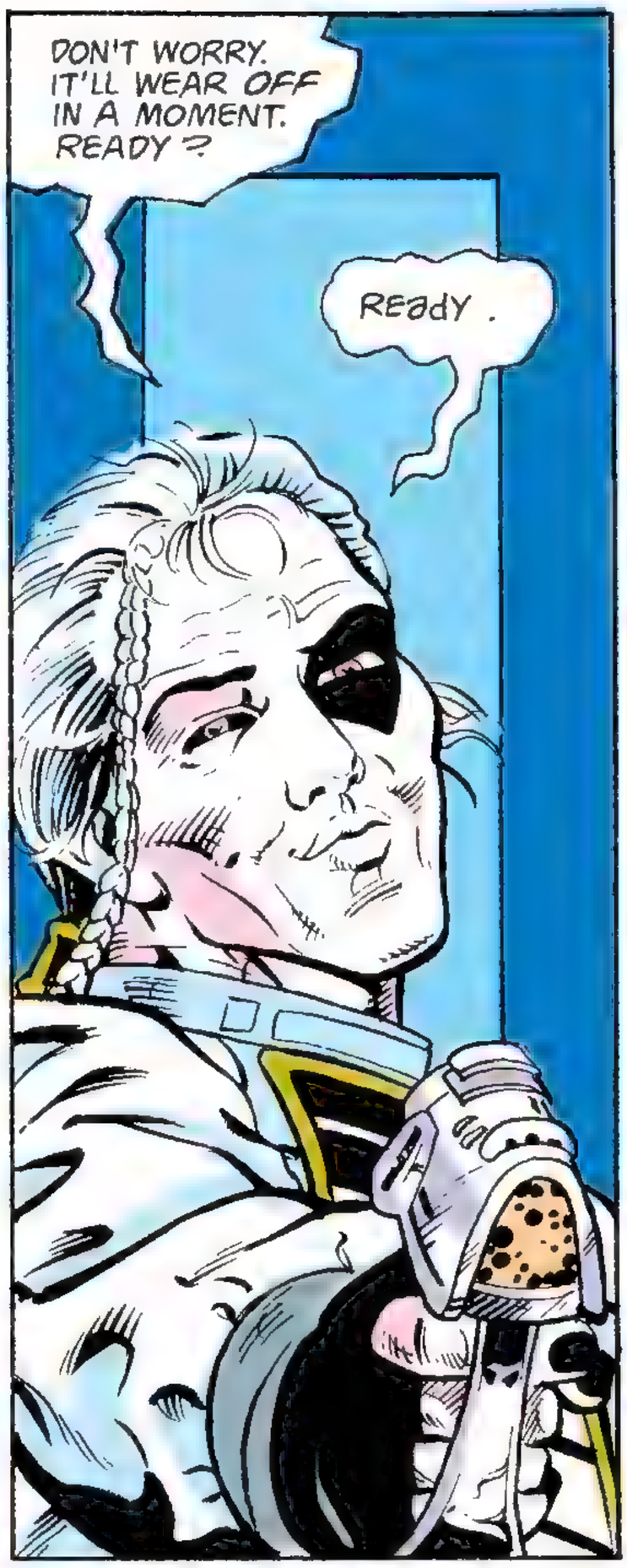
THE STATUE !
KRAAK

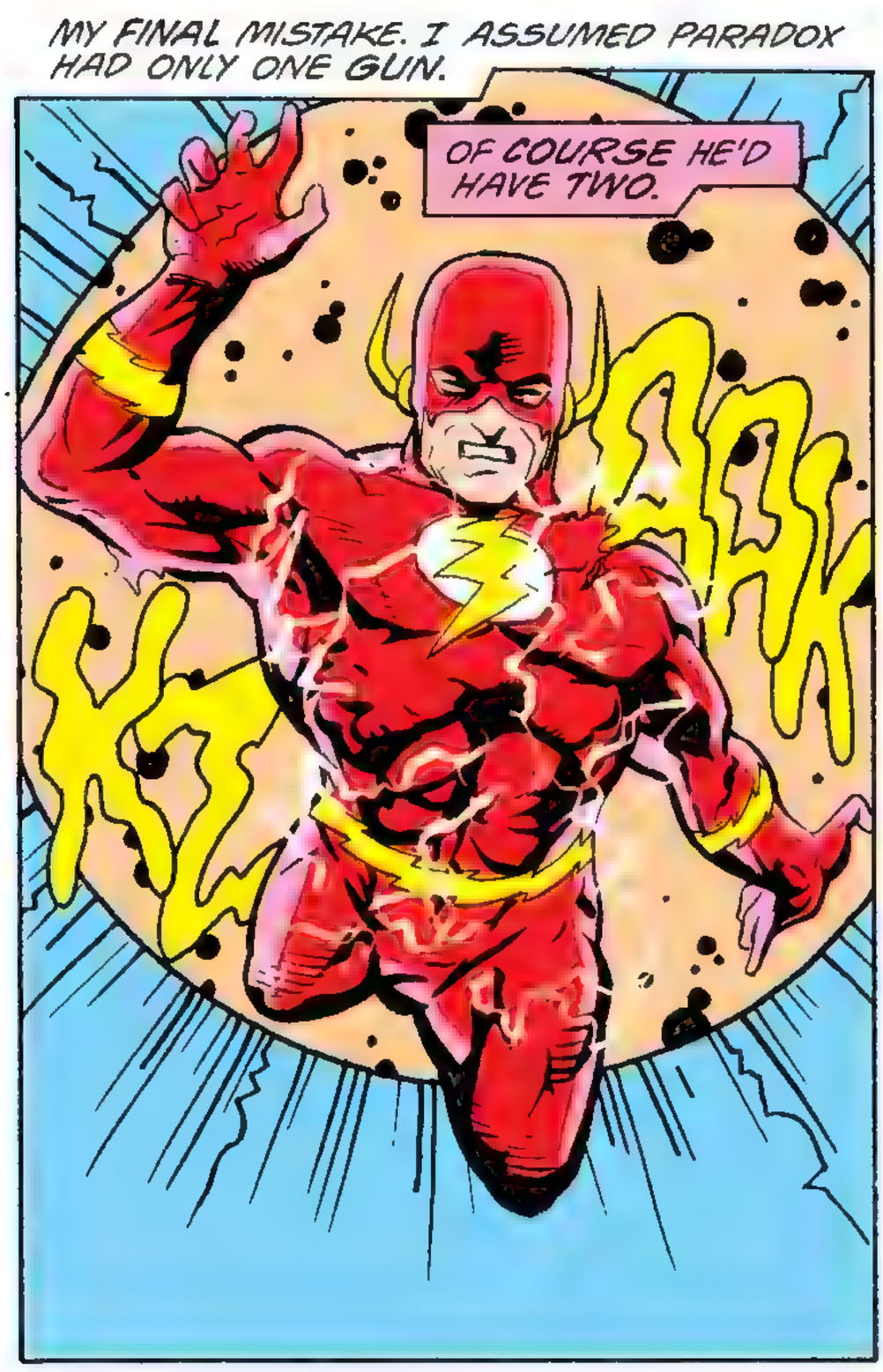

HE'S GETTING CREATIVE. THE SHARDS OF GLASS AREN'T FALLING.
INSTEAD, THEY HANG IN THE AIR LIKE A CURTAIN OF RAZORS.

CAN'T VIBRATE ANYMORE. I HAVE TO FIND AN OPENING BEFORE HE GETS AWAY.
46


hasn't he had ENOUGH?
APPARENTLY NOT.


CAN'T BREATHE? OF COURSE NOT.
I've slowed down your lungs.
CAN'T-- CAN'T--


DON'T WORRY. IT'LL WEAR OFF IN A MOMENT. READY?
Ready.


MY FINAL MISTAKE. I ASSUMED PARADOX HAD ONLY ONE GUN.
OF COURSE HE'D HAVE TWO.

WHAT NOW?
I know. the old familiar FAVORITE. You slow down the left side of his body-- and I'll SPEED UP the RIGHT.
1
47

THAT WAY, THE HEART SEIZES UP-- AND HE DIES OF A MASSIVE CORONARY.

WHY NOT?

IT WORKED WITH HIS SON.

NO!

WHAM

UNNF! TELL HIM! TELL HIM! HE'LL KILL US!

HE'S ALIVE! WE SWEAR! WE LIED! HE'S ALIVE!

WHY? WHY DID YOU SAY THAT?

WE =KOFF= WE WANTED YOU TO HURT BEFORE WE...

YOU DON'T KNOW FROM HURT, RATBAG. NOW TELL ME WHERE HE IS.

=KKK=

WHERE IS MY SON?

48

IT APPEARS PARADOX WAS *SUCCESSFUL*, DIOGENES... AS WERE *ALL* YOUR AGENTS.

EXIT

EACH OF THEIR *SPECIAL GUNS* SAPPED A PORTION OF THE FLASH'S *SPEED* AND *AURA*, TRANSMITTING IT BACK TO *US*... INTO A MACHINE LARGE ENOUGH TO *CONTAIN* IT. NOW YOU CAN DO WITH IT WHAT YOU *WILL*... AND LET *US GO*.

IN DUE *TIME*, DOCTOR.

MY SON, I PROMISED TO GIVE YOU *POWER*. POWER TO CONTROL OUR FAMILY AND OUR *BUSINESS*.

AND I *WILL*. THE POWER OF OUR *ENEMY* NOW BELONGS TO *US*.

IN A MOMENT, MATTHEW, IT WILL BELONG TO *YOU*... AND *WITH IT*, YOU WILL *RULE*.

KLA AASH

I'M HERE FOR MY *SON*.

EXIT

49

WALLY...?

IT'S *ME*, TINA. HOW *IS* HE?

HE'LL BE *FINE*. IT LOOKS LIKE THEY TOOK DECENT *CARE* OF HIM.

PARADOX TOLD ME ALL ABOUT YOUR *MACHINE*, DIOGENES! GET *AWAY* FROM IT! YOU CAN'T--

I *CAN* AND I *WILL*.

DIOGENES, *NO!* YOU DON'T *REALIZE--!*

BRA-KOW!

YOU *FOOL*.

FATHER! IT'S *WORKING!* THE POWER-- IT'S *ASTOUNDING!* I LOOK AT ALL OF YOU AND YOU *CRAWL!* YOU *CRAWL* IN *SLOW MOTION!*

YOU'RE GOING *SLOWER!* SLOWER *STILL!*

THE *POWER*-- FATHER, *STOP IT!* SOMETHING'S GOING *WRONG*--

50

--TOO MUCH MUCH FASTERFASTERFASTERSTOPBREATHEHEART HELPMEHELPHELPHELP HELP

ME ::

WHAT HAVE THEY *DONE* TO YOU, MATTHEW? *WHAT HAVE THEY DONE?*

WHAT *HAVE I* DONE...

51

THEY'RE GONE. BOTH OF THEM.

I TRIED TO STOP HIM, BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN. I CONTROL THE POWER BECAUSE I HAVE THE RIGHT GENETIC MAKEUP.

MATTHEW DIDN'T-- AND SO THE POWER CONTROLLED HIM.

WALLY, IT... IT WAS ALL TO PROTECT TINA. THEY SAID...

I KNOW, JERRY. DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT.

ANYWAY, IT'S OVER. THE MACHINE REABSORBED THE POWER. EVERYTHING THAT MAKES YOU THE FLASH IS IN THAT TUBE UP THERE.

WELL? WE'RE NOT JUST GOING TO LEAVE IT UP THERE, ARE WE?

NO. NO, WE'RE NOT.

52

WELL! LOOK WHO'S UP!

HI, DAD.

DAD... I'M SORRY.

SORRY? FOR WHAT?

YOU KNOW. 'BOUT JANIE NEWMAN. 'BOUT DOING LIKE YOU TOLD ME NOT TO.

HEY... IT'S OKAY. YOU DID RIGHT. YOU SAVED SOMEONE'S LIFE.

THAT MAKES YOU PART OF THE FAMILY.

I DON'T UNNERSTAND.

'S OKAY. WHY DON'T YOU GET SOME REST AND WE'LL SEE YOU TOMORROW, OKAY? OKAY.

YEAH, HE'S DOING GREAT.

ROOMS

NO, NOT YET. CAN YOU IMAGINE WHEN HE FINDS OUT...?

ME? I'M JUST FINE. OUR LIVES ARE OUR *OWN* AGAIN.

THAT'S *RIGHT*. NO MORE *RUNNING*.

OOPS.

NOTHING. LISTEN, WOULD YOU MIND DRIVING OVER AND PICKING ME UP?

OKAY. I'LL BE OUT FRONT.

I LOVE YOU, TOO.

54

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST.

WEST

10

I'M A NORMAL MAN IN A NORMAL WORLD.

AND I COULDN'T BE HAPPIER.

AND HIM?

THAT'S MY BOY.

55

"FLASH, I FOUND THESE PAPERS..."

"FLASH?"

HUH?

FLASH, ARE YOU LISTENING?

?

THERE YOU ARE! I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR YOU!

YOU SEEMED RATHER UPSET WHEN YOU LEFT FOR LUNCH, MS. BLACKMON. PERHAPS WE CAN TALK ABOUT WHAT IS TROUBLING YOU...

...THE WEIRDEST FEELING-- BUT IT'S GONE NOW!

AND WHAT WAS SHE SAYING...?

OH, FORGET IT. LOOKS LIKE IT WAS JUST ANOTHER LOVERS' QUARREL OR SOMETHING.

IF IT'S THAT IMPORTANT, I'M SURE I'LL HEAR FROM HER AGAIN.

END.

BORN TO RUN!

FLASH

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

62
EARLY MAY 92

YEAR ONE

WAID
LaROCQUE
MARZAN

CHAPTER ONE
THUNDERSTRUCK!

GL
JMJ
1992

Cover by **Greg LaRocque** and **José Marzán Jr.**

STOP ME IF YOU'VE HEARD THIS ONE.

TWO TERRORISTS WALK INTO A JAIL CELL.

OKAY. ACTUALLY, THEY'RE THROWN INTO A JAIL CELL FOLLOWING A SERIES OF LOCAL BOMBINGS.

AT 11:42 A.M., THE COPS OVERHEAR THE FIRST TERRORIST SAY TO THE SECOND ONE, "TELL THEM ABOUT THE AIRPORT BOMB I HAD YOU SET FOR TWELVE MIDNIGHT. MAYBE THEY'LL CUT US A BREAK!"

THEN THE SECOND ONE SAYS... WAIT FOR IT...

"TWELVE MIDNIGHT?

"I THOUGHT YOU SAID TWELVE NOON!"

FLASH: YEAR ONE
BORN TO RUN!
CHAPTER 1

THE FLASH

Please join...
GREG LA ROCQUE, PENCILLER
JOSE MARZAN JR., INKER
TIM HARKINS, LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE, COLORISTS
BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITOR
in extending a heartfelt FLASH welcome to our new writer: MARK WAID!

BY THE TIME I HEARD THE NEWS ON TV-- AT FIVE 'TIL-- AIRPORT AUTHORITIES HAD A FULL-SCALE EVACUATION UNDER WAY.

POLICE TRIED DESPERATELY TO KEEP THE CROWDS SANE AND ORDERLY. THEY FAILED.

KCCI-INFORADIO 88

UP-TO-THE-SECOND NEWS!

WHICH WASN'T THE WORST OF IT.

THE WORST OF IT WAS THAT, NO MATTER HOW HARD THEY WERE PRESSED...

...THE TERRORISTS REFUSED TO REVEAL THE BOMB'S EXACT LOCATION.

IT COULD BE...

ABSOLUTELY...

...ANYWHERE!

NOW I HAVE THREE MINUTES TO SEARCH THREE MILLION SQUARE FEET AND SAVE THREE HUNDRED LIVES.

ALL RIGHT. DON'T GET HUNG UP ON THE TIME OR YOU'LL **BLOW** IT.

JUST CONCENTRATE ON FINDING THE **BOMB**. THAT'S ALL YOU CAN AFFORD TO THINK ABOUT.

PLEASE DO NOT WALK ON CONVEYER

AFTER ALL, TIME IS ON YOUR SIDE.

YOU'RE WALLY WEST.

THE FLASH.

THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE.

MEN

THINK.

THINK.

SALE 50% off

Mr. Bold's hair salon

RAMU CARDS-MAGAZIN

WAS THE BOMB HIDDEN IN SOME LUGGAGE? NO, I'VE GONE THROUGH ALL THE BAGS.

INFORADIO 88

UP-TO-THE-SECOND NEWS!

OR HAVE I ?

LOST & FOUND

THAT'S IT. WHY WORK TO SQUIRREL THE BOMB AWAY IN A CORNER SOMEWHERE?

WHY NOT HIDE IT INSIDE SOMETHING NONDESCRIPT... "LOSE" IT... AND THEN LET AIRPORT PERSONNEL SQUIRREL IT AWAY FOR YOU?

NOTHING HERE... OR HERE...

FOR AN AWFUL NANOSECOND, I THINK I'VE MADE A BAD GUESS, BUT I FORGOT...

... ISN'T LOST STUFF ALWAYS IN THE LAST PLACE YOU LOOK?

NOW--TO HAVE THE BOMB SQUAD DISARM THIS PUPPY WHILE THERE'S STILL...

...TIME...

KCCI - INFORADIO 88

P-TO-THE-SECOND NEWS

EVERYTHING FREEZES.

I SCREAM AT PEOPLE TO GET OUT OF MY WAY, BUT THEY CAN'T HEAR ME.

I'M MOVING AT TWICE THE SPEED OF SOUND.

BY THE TIME I CLEAR THE CROWD, I'M DOING MACH THREE.

THE BOMB, UNFORTUNATELY, CONTINUES TO BEAT MY TIME.

I'M NOT GOING TO MAKE IT.

THE CASING CRACKS AS I HIT THE TARMAC, AND I THINK ABOUT THE STUPID FOURTH OF JULY GAME I USED TO PLAY.

I'D LIGHT A FIRECRACKER AND HOLD ONTO IT FOR AS LONG AS I DARED BEFORE THROWING IT.

I GOT TO BE REALLY GOOD AT IT.

WHEN I BRAGGED ABOUT IT TO DAD, HE BEAT THE TAR OUT OF ME.

I ALWAYS THOUGHT HE'D OVERREACTED.

WHA-BOOM

I STAND CORRECTED.

NEWS TRAVELS FAST. WITHIN A HALF-HOUR, WORD'S OUT THAT THE DANGER HAS PASSED--THAT CENTRAL CITY AIRPORT'S BACK IN BUSINESS.

ALL AROUND ME, PEOPLE JANGLE WITH ADRENALINE RUSH. ME, I SEARCH FOR A SPOT TO COLLAPSE. I'M BEAT.

THE DOWN SIDE TO SUPER-SPEED IS THAT I BURN CALORIES LIKE AN ATOMIC FURNACE. MY GROCERY BILL IS BEYOND BELIEF.

DO YOU NEED A MENU, SIR?

NO, THANK YOU. JUST BRING ME ONE OF EVERYTHING.

OH, FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE!

SIR, IT WAS A JOKE. SAVE THE EDITORIAL COMMENTS FOR...

FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, HAVE YOU SEEN MY GLASSES ANYWHERE...?

GRAMPA...?

WALLY...?

WALLY, MY BOY! GOODNESS GRACIOUS, HOW'VE YOU BEEN?

FINE >unff< FINE, GRAMPA! BEEN LECTURING ABROAD AGAIN, HAVE YOU?

MY GRANDFATHER IS PROFESSOR IRA WEST. YES, THAT PROFESSOR WEST. THE NOBEL PRIZE WINNER. SOME SAY HE MAKES CARL SAGAN SOUND LIKE CHARO.

I HAVE INDEED--BUT I SEEM TO HAVE LEFT MY GLASSES ON THE PLANE...

AH. THERE THEY ARE.

•IRA WEST, GOD BLESS HIM, UNDERSTANDS COLD FUSION BUT NOT MICROWAVE OVENS.

I FEEL BAD ABOUT RUNNING INTO HIM. IT REMINDS ME THAT WE LIVE MAYBE TWELVE MILES APART, AND I NEVER VISIT.

THERE'S A REASON, AND WHILE I'M BUSY PRAYING HE DOESN'T MAKE ME SAY IT, HE GUILTS ME INTO COMING OVER FOR LUNCH.

38

AS FAMILY, THOUGH, WE KEEP HIS SECRET--THAT HE SPENDS SO MUCH TIME LOST IN DEEP THOUGHT, THE SIMPLER THINGS IN LIFE KIND OF... OH, ADDLE HIM.

THE WHOLE WAY HOME, HE DRIVES TEN MILES UNDER THE SPEED LIMIT. I TRY NOT TO FIDGET.

GRAMPA IRA HAD THREE CHILDREN. CHARLOTTE WAS THE OLDEST. SHE ALWAYS TALKED DOWN TO ME.

NEXT CAME IRA'S SON--MY DAD, RUDOLPH. HE AND GRAMPA WERE NEVER CLOSE... BUT THEN, DAD'S NOT CLOSE TO ANYONE.

LAST--AND BEST--CAME AUNT IRIS. IRIS MARRIED THE PERFECT MAN. HIS NAME WAS BARRY ALLEN.

BARRY AND I SHARED SOME SPECIAL THINGS. WE WERE BOTH SUPER-HEROES. HE WAS THE FLASH AND I WAS HIS KID SIDEKICK.

MORE THAN THAT, WE BOTH LOVED IRIS. AS FAR AS WE WERE CONCERNED, SHE HUNG THE MOON AND THE STARS.

IRIS DIED ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO.

I HAVEN'T SEEN MUCH OF GRAMPA SINCE.

COFFEE?

IF YOU'RE MAKING SOME, SURE. SUGAR, NO CREAM.

CREAM, NO SUGAR. CHECK.

NO, GRAMPA-- I SAID...

>SIGH< NEVER MIND..

DESPERATE TO AVOID CONVERSATION, I BEGIN PUTTERING THROUGH OLD BOXES. WITH A TWINGE, I REALIZE WHAT THEY CONTAIN.

THEY'RE AUNT IRIS'S PERSONAL EFFECTS. APPARENTLY, GRAMPA HAD FORGOTTEN HE HAD THEM.

IRIS WAS SO PROUD OF BARRY. SHE KEPT SCRAPBOOK AFTER SCRAPBOOK DETAILING HIS CAREER.

I WONDER IF I'M IN ANY OF THEM?

FLASH NABS M

OH, PUT IT IN NEUTRAL, WALLY. THEY WERE THE KING AND QUEEN OF CAMELOT. YOU WERE JUST A SERF. A COURT JESTER.

KID FLASH.

IRIS GAVE BARRY SO MUCH OF HER HEART THAT I WAS LUCKY THERE WAS ANY LOVE LEFT OVER FOR ME. BARRY WAS HER WORLD.

I MISS YOU, IRIS. I WANTED YOU TO BE PROUD OF ME, TOO. GUESS YOU NEVER KNEW THAT, DID YOU?

WHAT'S DOWN HERE? THIS ONE LOOKS DIFFERENT FROM THE REST...

FOR WALLY

OH, IRIS...

...YOU KNEW EVERYTHING.

THE SUMMER I TURNED TEN WAS THE SUMMER I STAYED WITH HER.

THE BEST SUMMER EVER.

I'D JUST SPENT THE PREVIOUS DECADE IMPRISONED IN BLUE VALLEY, NEBRASKA, BY TWO PEOPLE WHO HAD NO BUSINESS BEING PARENTS.

IRIS CALLED AND OFFERED TO PUT ME UP FOR A WHILE ONCE SCHOOL LET OUT. I'D FINISHED PACKING BY THE TIME MOM GOT OFF THE PHONE.

I'D NEVER BEEN THAT EXCITED BEFORE OR SINCE. IF IRIS HAD LIVED IN OMAHA OR ST. LOUIS OR FLAGSTAFF, I'D STILL HAVE BEEN THRILLED TO BE WITH HER.

BUT SHE LIVED IN CENTRAL CITY. HOME OF THE FLASH.

THE COOLEST PLACE IN THE WORLD.

DAD CAME HOME FROM WORK TO SEE ME OFF. I TOLD HIM AND MOM NOT TO WORRY ABOUT ME.

AS IF THEY WOULD.

THE BUS RIDE WAS 4,000 MILES LONG. IT TOOK NINE WEEKS.

I'D SWEAR TO THAT ON A STACK OF BIBLES.

THOUGH IT HAD BEEN THREE CHRISTMASES SINCE I'D SEEN IRIS, SHE STAYED IN TOUCH WITH LETTERS AND CLIPPINGS ABOUT THE FLASH. SHE TREATED ME LIKE A FRIEND-- NOT LIKE A KID.

WE WERE TWO ALLIES PROTECTING EACH OTHER AGAINST THE REST OF THE WEST FAMILY.

HEY, KIDDO! I THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER GET HERE!

THAT MAKES TWO OF US!

SO, HOW ARE YOUR MOTHER AND FATHER?

>SIGH< SAME AS ALWAYS.

I SEE. WELL, THEN, HOW ARE YOU? READY TO TAKE ON CENTRAL CITY, JUST YOU AND ME?

GOTHAM CITY 3 45
METROPOLIS 5 10
NEW YORK 5 20
7:12

YOU BET! WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO FIRST?

WHAT?

I KNOW WHERE WE CAN GO! NO, WAIT... FORGET IT. YOU WON'T LIKE IT.

DUMB IDEA. SKIP IT. REALLY.

WHAT WHAT WHAT?

OH... I JUST THOUGHT MAYBE WE'D GO VISIT THE FLASH MUSEUM. 'COURSE, YOU MIGHT NOT BE INTERESTED...

YEAH!

SO--YOU UP FOR IT?

YEAH! YEAH! YEAH!

YOU TEASE ME.

YOU LOVE IT. SO IT'S A DATE. FIRST, THOUGH, WE HAVE TO MEET SOMEONE VERY SPECIAL FOR LUNCH. HIS NAME IS...

HEY! THE FLASH!

WOW.

OH, WOW!

IRIS, IT'S HIM! IT'S REALLY HIM!

WALLY, THIS IS NEWS! I HAVE TO GO PHONE THIS IN, BUT I'LL BE RIGHT BACK! DON'T GO ANYWHERE, DO YOU HEAR ME? DON'T MOVE!

YES, MA'AM!

LIKE THERE WAS ANYTHING ELSE HAPPENING IN THE WORLD AT THAT MOMENT...

THE GUNMEN HAD ROBBED THE DIAMOND EXCHANGE. THEY HADN'T GOTTEN TEN FEET WHEN THE FLASH HIMSELF SHOWED UP TO STOP THEM.

HIS HANDS MOVED SO FAST, THEY CUT THROUGH THEIR GUNS LIKE THEY WERE CARDBOARD.

I WAS SPELLBOUND.

THEN HE DID MY FAVORITE TRICK. HE CREATED A CYCLONE THAT LIFTED TWO OF THEM INTO THE AIR.

BUT HE'D FORGOTTEN ABOUT THE THIRD.

FLASH, LOOK OUT!

I YELLED TOO LATE.

WITH JEWELS SCATTERED UNDER HIM, FLASH LOST HIS FOOTING AND WENT DOWN HARD.

THEY HAD HIM SURROUNDED. ONE DREW A GUN.

THEY WERE GOING TO KILL THE FLASH.

I HEARD POLICE CARS APPROACHING, BUT I KNEW THEY'D ARRIVE TOO LATE. SOMEBODY HAD TO DO SOMETHING...

...FAST.

SAY G'NIGHT, TWINKLETOES!

YOUR RACE IS RUNNNNGGHHH!

ONE THING YOU LEARN WHEN SUMMER COMES TO THE HOT MIDWEST:

FIRE HYDRANTS PACK A LOT OF WALLOP.

MY STUNT DIDN'T TAKE THEM OUT, BUT IT KNOCKED THEM OFF-BALANCE AND BOUGHT FLASH A FEW EXTRA SECONDS.

HE USED THEM WELL. THOSE CROOKS DIDN'T KNOW WHAT HIT THEM.

I BLINKED, AND HE WAS THERE. RIGHT THERE.

THAT WAS QUICK THINKING, SON! YOU SAVED MY LIFE! THANKS!

S-SURE! AN- ANYTHING FOR YOU, FLASH! YOU-- YOU'RE MY HERO!

NOT TODAY, PAL! TODAY, YOU'RE MY HERO!

TAKE CARE!

WOW.

WOW.

WALLY! THERE YOU ARE!

I TOLD IRIS WHAT HAD HAPPENED. SHE WAS REALLY EXCITED FOR ME. AS A REPORTER, SHE'D MET FLASH TOO, SO WE COMPARED NOTES.

WE DECIDED HE WAS EVEN COOLER IN PERSON THAN HE WAS ON TV.

HI, IRIS! AM I LATE?

DO DUCKS QUACK?

WALLY, THIS IS MY FIANCÉ, BARRY ALLEN.! BARRY, I'D LIKE YOU TO MEET MY BEST FRIEND--WALLY WEST.!

WAID

MADISON

UMM...

I THINK HE WAS SURPRISED TO SEE ME.

SO! YOU'RE IRIS'S NEPHEW, HUH? SORRY I KEPT YOU WAITING! GUESS I'M A SLOWPOKE!

YEP, THAT'S IT.! JUST NATURALLY SLOW...

YOUR HAIR'S WET.

JUST STEPPED OUT OF THE SHOWER. SO, WALLY-- IRIS TELLS ME YOU'RE A BIG FLASH FAN.!

THE BIGGEST.!

YOU KNOW, BARRY'S IN THE SAME LINE OF WORK.! HE'S A POLICE OFFICER.!

COOL.! CAN I SEE YOUR GUN?

WELL, I DON'T REALLY CARRY A GUN...

BARRY'S A POLICE SCIENTIST. HE DOES A LOT OF IMPORTANT LAB WORK.

SOUNDS... FASCINATING.

I THINK SO. TELL HIM WHAT YOU DO, BARRY.

SO HE DID.

WHAT A STIFF. NO ONE COULD BE THAT DULL UNLESS THEY WERE MAKING A REAL EFFORT.

IT WAS ALMOST HOKEY ENOUGH TO BE AN ACT--LIKE THIS GUY WAS COVERING SOMETHING. HIDING SOME SORT OF ELECTRIFYING SECRET.

EITHER THAT, OR IRIS HAD LOST HER MIND.

THE MOMENT BARRY TOOK A BREATH, WE WERE OUT OF THERE.

THAT WAS *NICE!* I'M *REALLY GLAD* THE TWO MOST IMPORTANT MEN IN MY LIFE *LIKE* EACH OTHER!

SEE YOU TWO *AFTER WORK!* WALLY, BARRY TOOK THE *AFTERNOON OFF* TO SPEND WITH YOU!

OH BOY!

CONSIGNED TO AN AFTERNOON IN BARRY'S *SWINGING BACHELOR PAD.* I WAS *BESIDE MYSELF.*

... DO A LOT OF *BALLISTIC WORK,* TOO. YOU KNOW, TRACING *BULLETS* TO SPECIFIC *GUNS*...

YOU DON'T *SAY.*

SO WHAT'S TO *DO* AROUND HERE?

THEN HE REALLY PULLED A RABBIT OUT OF A HAT.

WE'RE HERE BECAUSE I HAVE A SURPRISE FOR YOU. WHAT TIME DO YOU HAVE?

TWO.

WELL, IT JUST SO HAPPENS THAT THE FLASH SAID HE'D BE DROPPING BY ABOUT TWO. HE'S PROBABLY IN BACK.

YEAH, RIGHT.

NO, REALLY! WE'RE FRIENDS!

YOU'RE HIS FRIEND? WHY WOULD HE HANG AROUND WITH... I MEAN... YOU KNOW THE FLASH? HE'S HERE?

YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME, YOU CHECK IT OUT FOR YOURSELF.

SO I DID.

AS I OPENED THE DOOR, I FELT A WIND, LIKE SOMETHING BLOWING PAST ME.

WHEW! WHAT A DRAFT!

THERE A LIGHT SWITCH IN HERE, MR. ALLEN?

"HE'S PROBABLY IN BACK!" I THOUGHT HE WAS PULLING MY LEG.

DON'T GET UP, BARRY!

I'VE GOT IT!

THAT WAS THE THING ABOUT BARRY, THOUGH...

... HE ALWAYS TOLD THE TRUTH.

I THOUGHT I WAS GOING TO DIE.

SO... WE MEET AGAIN.' I DIDN'T CATCH THE NAME, THOUGH... WHAT WAS IT ?

OH, WAIT ! WALLY... IS THAT IT ?

WALLY.

SIR.

WOW.

IS ALL THIS YOURS ?

IT'S BARRY'S, ACTUALLY. HE LETS ME USE HIS LAB WHEN I'M TRYING TO CRACK AN IMPORTANT CASE.

THANKS AGAIN FOR DISTRACTING THOSE CROOKS, WALLY. I REALLY OWE YOU ONE. WHAT CAN I DO FOR YOU ?

ARE YOU KIDDING ? THIS IS GREAT.'

I... I HAVE SO MANY QUESTIONS...

OKAY, THEN. ASK ME SOMETHING. ANYTHING.

EXCEPT THAT.

WHO ARE YOU REALLY ?

OKAY... HOW'D YOU GET TO BE SO *FAST*?

THAT ONE I CAN *ANSWER*. IT HAPPENED IN A *LABORATORY*. I WAS STANDING IN FRONT OF A *CHEMICAL CABINET*...

JUST...

...LIKE...

...*THIS* ONE!

AND?

YOU WON'T *BELIEVE* IT.

OKAY.

TRY ME.

THERE WAS A *FEROCIOUS* THUNDERSTORM BREWING OUTSIDE. LIGHTNING BOLTS *CRACKLED* THROUGH THE AIR AND *LIT UP* THE *SKY*.

AND?

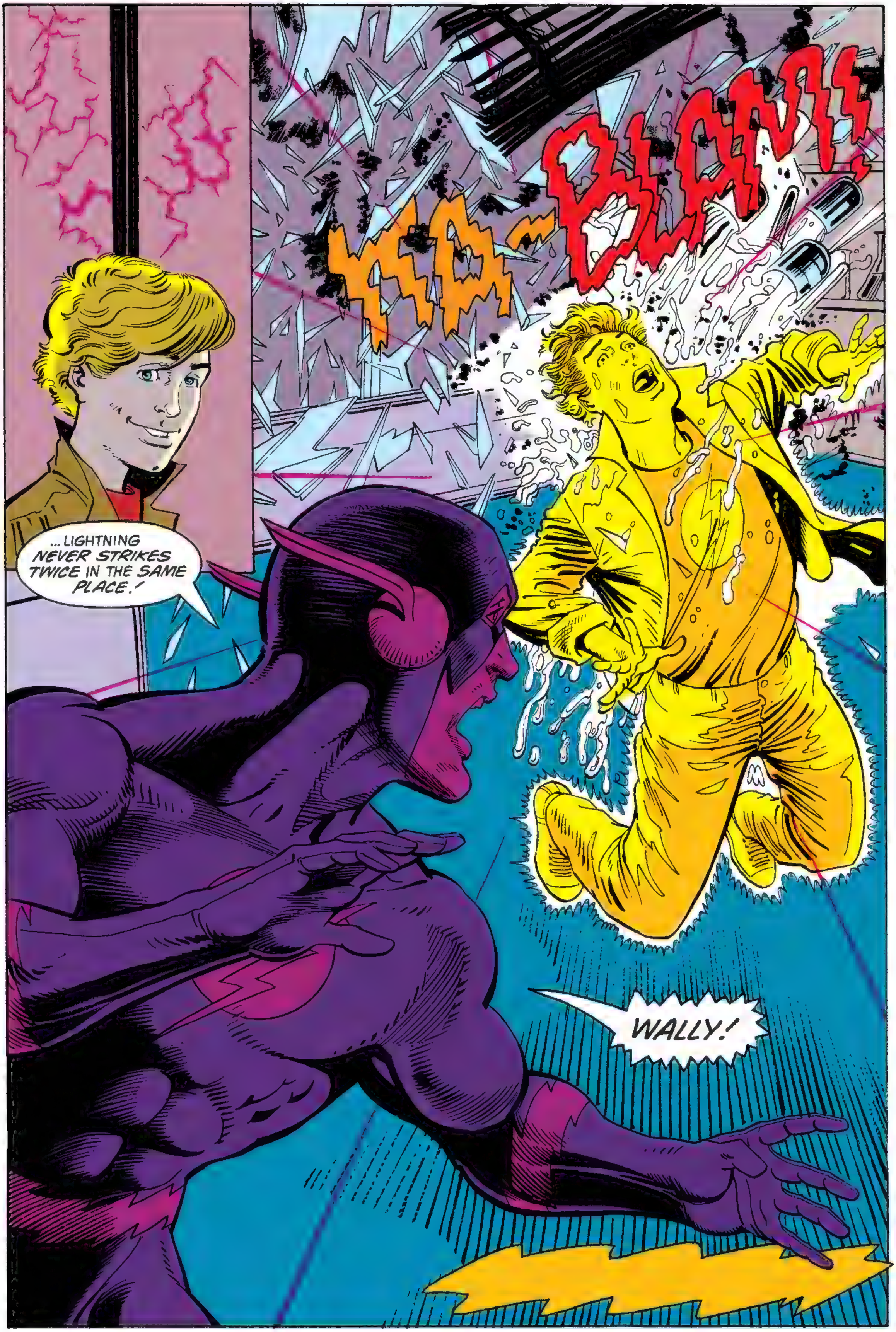
AND *SUDDENLY*... WITHOUT *WARNING*... ONE OF THOSE BOLTS *BURST* THROUGH THE WINDOW, SHATTERING THE CABINET AND *COVERING* ME WITH ELECTRIFIED CHEMICALS!

FROM THAT MOMENT *ON*, I WAS *TRANSFORMED*... *SUPERCHARGED*! I'D BEEN GIVEN THE GIFT OF *SUPER-SPEED*!

WOW! THAT'S *SO COOL*! YOU ARE *SO LUCKY*!

I *WISH* SOMETHING LIKE THAT WOULD HAPPEN TO *ME*!

>HA HA< *SORRY*, WALLY! WHAT HAPPENED THAT DAY WAS A *BILLION-TO-ONE CHANCE*! YOU KNOW WHAT THEY *SAY*...


KRAK-
BLAM!!
...LIGHTNING NEVER STRIKES TWICE IN THE SAME PLACE.!
WALLY.!

BORN TO RUN!

FLASH

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

63
LATE MAY 92

YEAR ONE

WAID
LaROCQUE
MARZAN

CHAPTER TWO

INHERIT THE WIND!

Cover by **Greg LaRocque** and **José Marzán Jr.**

UP TO THEN, THINGS HAD BEEN GOING REMARKABLY WELL.

THE FLASH WAS MY IDOL-- AND EARLIER THAT DAY, I'D SAVED HIM FROM BEING SHOT BY THIEVES.

AS A REWARD, HE SPENT THE AFTERNOON WITH ME AND TOLD ME EXACTLY HOW HE'D GOTTEN SO FAST.

WALLY! WALLY! DON'T MOVE!

OUT HERE IN THE MIDWEST, WHERE THE LAND IS FLAT, THUNDERSTORMS TEND TO ROLL IN OUT OF NOWHERE.

SOMETIMES THEY'RE NO MORE THAN LIGHT SHOWS, THROWING OUT THUNDERLESS HEAT LIGHTNING.

OTHER TIMES, THEY'RE FIERCE, AND THEY'LL DO A LITTLE DAMAGE.

EITHER WAY, AS FORCES OF NATURE GO, THEY'RE PRETTY TRANSITORY. THEY NEVER LEAVE BEHIND ANY SORT OF LASTING MARK.

ALMOST NEVER.

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST, AND I'M AN ODDSBREAKER.

NOT AN ODDSMAKER. AN ODDSMAKER IS A GAMBLER.

AN ODDSBREAKER, I'VE DECIDED, IS SOMEONE WHOSE LIFE IS FILLED WITH COINCIDENCE.

LIKE ME. TODAY, FOR INSTANCE, IN A CITY OF 750,000, I BUMPED INTO MY OWN GRANDFATHER PURELY BY CHANCE.

AN HOUR LATER, OUT OF THE BLUE, I CAME ACROSS THE LONG-LOST PERSONAL EFFECTS OF HIS DAUGHTER-- MY LATE AUNT, IRIS.

IRIS USED TO KEEP SCRAPBOOKS ABOUT HER HUSBAND, THE FLASH.

MUCH TO MY SURPRISE, SHE KEPT ONE ABOUT ME, TOO.

LEAFING THROUGH IT IS WHAT GOT ME THINKING ABOUT COINCIDENCE, BECAUSE IT HAD ME REMEMBERING.

REMEMBERING THE DAY THAT BROKE ALL THE ODDS.

KA-BLAM!

WALLY!

FLASH: YEAR ONE
BORN TO RUN!
CHAPTER 2
INHERIT the WIND

MARK WAID - STORY, GREG LA ROCQUE - PENCILS
JOSE MARZAN JR. - INKS, TIM HARKINS - LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE - COLORIST, BRIAN AUGUSTYN - EDITOR

UP TO THEN, THINGS HAD BEEN GOING REMARKABLY WELL.

THE FLASH WAS MY IDOL-- AND EARLIER THAT DAY, I'D SAVED HIM FROM BEING SHOT BY THIEVES.

AS A REWARD, HE SPENT THE AFTERNOON WITH ME AND TOLD ME EXACTLY HOW HE'D GOTTEN SO FAST.

WALLY! WALLY! DON'T MOVE!

ONE AFTERNOON--HE SAID--A LIGHTNING BOLT HAD KNIFED INTO HIS LAB, STRUCK A CABINET, AND SHOWERED HIM WITH ELECTRIFIED CHEMICALS. I SAID THAT WAS AMAZING.

HE SAID I DIDN'T KNOW THE HALF OF IT. THE ODDS OF THAT HAPPENING HAD BEEN A BILLION TO ONE.

WELL... NOW THEY WERE A BILLION TO TWO.

SLOWLY... SLOWLY! ARE YOU OKAY?

I... GUESS. A LITTLE... TINGLY... TWITCHY...

HEY! WHAT WAS ALL THAT FOR? WHAT A MEAN TRICK!

TRICK? WHAT--?

WALLY, DON'T YOU REALIZE WHAT JUST HAPPENED?

SURE! YOU WERE SHOWING ME HOW YOU GOT YOUR POWERS-- AND THEN YOU ZAPPED ME WITH ALL THAT JUNK!

OH, MAN... WHEN AUNT IRIS SEES THIS...

WALLY, IT WASN'T ME! IT WAS THE LIGHTNING! IT--

GET *OUTTA* HERE! YOU JUST FINISHED *SAYING* HOW SOMETHING LIKE THAT COULDN'T *EVER* HAPPEN AGAIN!

COME *ON!* WHAT ARE YOU TELLING ME *NOW?* THAT I'VE GOT *SUPER-SPEED* OR SOMETHING?

I'M NOT *TELLING* YOU *ANYTHING*. I'M *SHOWING* YOU.

WALLY, *QUICK!* *GRAB* THE *MICROSCOPE!*

THATABOY! SEE HOW--

--*FAST* YOU ARE!?

HIS MOUTH WAS OPEN SO WIDE, I COULD COUNT HIS *FILLINGS*. LIGHTNING HAD STRUCK HIM, GIVING HIM *TERRIFIC* SPEED.

LIGHTNING HAD STRUCK ME, RUINING MY *CLOTHES*.

SOMETHING DIDN'T ADD UP.

OF COURSE, I WAS TOO BUSY BEING EMBARRASSED TO WORRY ABOUT IT.

OH, GEEZ! I'M REALLY SORRY! I TRIED TO GET IT-- I REALLY TRIED!

BUT YOU WEREN'T QUICK ENOUGH!

I KNOW... AND THAT'S WHAT PUZZLES ME! TELL ME-- HOW DO YOU FEEL?

WET.

SMELLY.

NO, I MEAN...

OKAY. LET'S STOP TALKING...

... AND START DOING!

I TOLD BARRY WE'D BE STEPPING OUT FOR A WHILE.

I WANT TO PUT A LITTLE DISTANCE BETWEEN US AND THIS LAB.

NEAT! LET'S GO!

NOT THE DOOR. FORGET THE DOOR. TELL ME, WALLY... IN ALL YOUR TEN YEARS, HOW MANY WALLS HAVE YOU VIBRATED THROUGH?

COUNTING THE NEXT ONE?

YEP.

ONE.

THEN THE WAY...

...I SEE IT...

...YOU'RE OVERDUE!

COOOOOL!

BEFORE I COULD BLINK, WE'D LEFT THE CITY-- AND THE THUNDERSTORM--FAR BEHIND US.

GOOD ENOUGH. THAT GETS US OUT OF THE RAIN.

WOW! THIS IS GREAT! KEEP GOING!

IN TIME. LET'S JUST RELAX FOR A FEW MINUTES FIRST.

YOU REALLY LIKE TO RUN, DON'T YOU?

SURE DO!

SMAK

THEN MAYBE YOU'RE IN LUCK.

I THINK I'M *ON* TO *SOMETHING*, WALLY. I THINK YOU'VE GIVEN ME A *BIG INSIGHT* INTO THE *NATURE* OF *SPEED!*

ME?

YOU. SEE, I'D *ALWAYS ASSUMED* THAT I'D GOTTEN MY *POWERS INSTANTLY*-- THE *MOMENT* LIGHTNING STRUCK.

LOOKING BACK, THOUGH, I REALIZE THAT I WAS LIKE *YOU*. NOT ONLY WASN'T I *HURT*, BUT I FELT PERFECTLY *NORMAL*... UNTIL I STARTED *RUNNING*...REALLY *MOVING!*

MAYBE-- *MAYBE*--THIS *POWER* ISN'T SOMETHING THAT *SNEAKS UP* ON YOU. *MAYBE* IT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO REACH OUT AND *GRAB*.

MAYBE YOU HAVE TO STOP *STANDING AROUND*--

--AND JUST CUT *LOOSE!*

KLK

INSTINCTIVELY, I CHASED THE PITCH. IF I'D STOPPED TO REALIZE THE FUTILITY OF WHAT I WAS DOING, I WOULDN'T HAVE BOTHERED.

WOULD A SNAIL WASTE TIME RUNNING AFTER A HUMMINGBIRD?

WELL... MAYBE IF HE WAS CAUGHT TOTALLY OFF GUARD, HE WOULD. HE'D GIVE UP PRETTY QUICK, THOUGH.

I WOULD HAVE, TOO... EXPECT THE WONKIEST THING HAPPENED WHEN I PULLED OUT ALL THE STOPS AND REALLY HAULED.

THE BALL SLOWED DOWN... BUT IT DIDN'T FALL.

IT WAS AS IF THE VERY AIR IN FRONT OF IT STARTED TO... THICKEN. LIKE THAT BASEBALL WAS NO LONGER INTERESTED IN MOVING FORWARD OR DOWN OR AWAY OR ANYWHERE.

THEN IT STOPPED. IT HUNG THERE IN FRONT OF ME, LIKE SOME RIPE, RED PLUM.

Brooks Robinson

SO I PICKED IT.

THAP!

GOT IT, FLASH!

FLASH?

NICE STOP.

THE BALL... IT WASN'T MOVING...

OH, YES IT WAS! BUT COMPARED TO YOU, IT WAS STANDING STILL!

FOR A MOMENT-- FOR ONE-TENTH OF A SECOND-- YOU WERE THE FASTEST THING ON EARTH.

I...I...

AND I... DID THAT? HOW...?

FRICTION HEAT. YOU'RE NOT AFFECTED BY IT, BECAUSE THE CHEMICALS COATED YOU WITH A PROTECTIVE AURA--KIND OF AN INVISIBLE WIND-SCREEN.

IT'S FOR REAL, WALLY! YOU'VE GOT THE GREATEST POWER IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD!

NOW CAN YOU FEEL IT?

CAN I? CAN I?

CAN I EVER!

WHOOOSH!

WHEN YOU'RE A KID, PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS TELLING YOU HOW FAST YOUR YOUTH WILL GO BY.

THIS IS BALONEY.

WHEN YOU'RE A KID, EVERY DAY IS AN ETERNITY.

YOUR ENTIRE SPHERE OF EXISTENCE IS RULED BY PEOPLE WHO TELL YOU WHEN TO GO AND WHEN TO STOP AND WHEN TO MOVE...

... AND WHEN TO STAY STILL.

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST, AND AT AGE TEN, I'D FINALLY FOUND A WAY TO KEEP PEOPLE FROM RUNNING MY LIFE:

I STARTED DOING THE RUNNING.

WHAT I SAW WAS INDESCRIBABLE. ALL AROUND ME, CARS AND BUILDINGS BECAME BLIPS, THEIR SHAPES AND COLORS BLENDING TOGETHER.

PEOPLE WERE FROZEN IN TIME, LIVING BETWEEN THE TICKS OF A CLOCK.

AND THE ONLY SOUNDS IN THE WORLD WERE THE ROAR OF THE WIND AND THE THUNDER OF MY OWN TWO FEET.

AND... OH, YEAH...

GUNSHOTS.

IT DIDN'T TAKE ME LONG TO ACT, CONSIDERING I WAS PRETTY MUCH A STRANGER TO CRIME.

I'D BEEN BORN AND RAISED IN BLUE VALLEY, NEBRASKA, A SUBURB OF EAST NOWHERE, U.S.A.

THE CLOSEST BLUE VALLEY HAD TO A BONA FIDE CRIMINAL WAS OLD MAN HOTCHKISS, WHO ONE TIME BOUNCED A CHECK... ON PURPOSE.

FOLKS IN CENTRAL CITY, IT SEEMED, WERE A LITTLE MORE DANGEROUS THAN THE ONES BACK HOME.

THE FINAL GUNMAN SAW US NAIL HIS BUDDIES AND KNEW THE ONLY CHANCE HE HAD OF GETTING AWAY...

Keep On Truckin

...WAS TO GIVE FLASH SOMETHING MORE IMPORTANT TO WORRY ABOUT...

...LIKE THE LIVES OF TWO INNOCENT BYSTANDERS.

AS ALWAYS, FLASH SEEMED TO HAVE MATTERS WELL IN HAND.

BY SPINNING AT SUPER-SPEED, HE CREATED AN UPDRAFT THAT SLOWED THEIR FALL.

I WANTED TO HELP, BUT I WASN'T SURE HOW.

BESIDES...

...I HAD PROBLEMS OF MY OWN.

DID YOU EVER SEE THE MOVIE FRANKENSTEIN? THE ONE WHERE PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS RUNNING IN TERROR FROM A MONSTER WHO MOVES SLOWER THAN YOUR GREAT-GRANDMOTHER?

I COULD NEVER UNDERSTAND WHAT'S TO BE SCARED OF.

THE ONLY THINGS THAT CAN HURT YOU...

... ARE THE ONES THAT CAN CATCH UP TO YOU.

NOW, UZI BULLETS PACK A LOT OF INERTIA. I COULDN'T JUST SWAT THEM AWAY LIKE FLIES.

AFTER ALL, MY HAND STILL STUNG FROM SHAGGING THAT BASEBALL. I COULD JUST IMAGINE WHAT HIGH-CALIBER SLUGS COULD DO TO ME, NO MATTER WHAT MY SPEED, IF I DIDN'T HANDLE IT WITH FINESSE.

SAD BUT TRUE. EVEN I COULDN'T STOP UZI AMMO.

I COULD, HOWEVER...

... REDIRECT IT.

BY THE TIME THAT WAS TAKEN CARE OF, THE BRICKLAYERS WERE SAFE. AND AS FOR THE FALLING BRICKS...

...WELL... THEY CAME IN PRETTY HANDY.

ONLY AFTER IT WAS ALL OVER DID IT HIT ME:

HEY-- AREN'T THESE THE SAME GUYS YOU BAGGED EARLIER TODAY AT THE DIAMOND EXCHANGE? WHY AREN'T THEY IN JAIL?

THEY ARE! I SAW TO IT PERSONALLY!

THEN I NOTICED SOMETHING ODD.

OH, WEIRD! FLASH, LOOK! THEY AREN'T THE SAME GUYS! THEY'RE--

REPORTERS!

NO, NOT REPORTERS! THEY'RE--

ULP!

I NEVER GOT TO FINISH MY SENTENCE.

WHOA! IT'S AUNT IRIS!

IRIS! LOOK! IT'S ME--

MMMLLLY! MMLLY MMST!

I DON'T GET IT! HOW COME YOU DIDN'T WANT TO STICK AROUND? WE COULD BE ON TV!

BECAUSE THE REAL STORY TODAY WOULD HAVE BEEN YOU--AND YOU WOULD HAVE BEEN A LITTLE HARD TO EXPLAIN!

BESIDES, YOU AND I NEED TO HAVE A LITTLE TALK.

DID I DO SOMETHING WRONG?

NO... AS A MATTER OF FACT, THE WAY YOU LIT INTO THOSE GUNMEN SHOWED A LOT OF COURAGE! I'M VERY PROUD OF YOU!

COOL.

STEALING THAT POLICEMAN'S HAT, THOUGH...

AH.

STILL IN ALL, YOU SEEM TO ME TO BE A PRETTY RESPONSIBLE KID. I HOPE THAT'S TRUE, BECAUSE HOWEVER IT HAPPENED-- AND WE MAY NEVER KNOW--

WELL... NOT FOR A WHILE, ANYWAY...

--YOU RECEIVED A VERY SPECIAL GIFT TODAY.

I WON'T ASK YOU TO *HIDE* THAT GIFT, BUT I *WILL* ASK YOU TO *EARN* IT.

DO YOU *SWEAR* TO ME YOU'LL USE IT *ONLY* TO HELP *PEOPLE IN NEED*, AND *NEVER* FOR *PERSONAL GAIN*?

YES, SIR. I DO.

"WOULD YOU HOP ON ONE *FOOT* FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE IF I ASKED YOU TO?"

"YES, SIR, I WOULD."

ALL RIGHT, THEN. ABOUT THOSE *REPORTERS*. WALLY, DO YOU KNOW WHY I WEAR A MASK?

YOU *SAID* WHY IN AN *INTERVIEW*! 'CAUSE IF CROOKS KNEW WHO YOU REALLY WERE, THEY'D COME *AFTER* YOU -- AND YOUR *FAMILY* AND *FRIENDS*!

THAT'S *EXACTLY RIGHT*-- AND THAT APPLIES TO YOU, TOO! SO DON'T TELL *ANYBODY* ABOUT YOUR POWERS!

NOT EVEN *AUNT IRIS*? SHE'S MY *BEST FRIEND*!

I UNDERSTAND THAT-- BUT FOR THE TIME BEING, LET'S KEEP IT *OUR SECRET*! THAT WAY, IT'S SOMETHING *YOU* AND I CAN SHARE! DEAL?

OKAY-- DEAL! BUT IF I'M RUNNING AROUND *HELPING* PEOPLE, HOW'M I GOING TO KEEP THEM FROM SEEING WHO *I AM*?

THE SAME WAY YOU'RE GOING TO SAVE A FORTUNE ON YOUR *SHOE BILLS*. CATCH.

IT'S A *RING*.

IT'S MORE THAN *THAT*. SEE THAT *HIDDEN SPRING* UNDERNEATH? PRESS IT!

NO WAY! IT'S A WHOLE COSTUME!

HOW'D IT FIT IN THERE?

IT'S MADE OF A SUPER-DURABLE, ELASTIC FABRIC OF MY OWN DESIGN. NORMALLY, IT'S TINY-- BUT WHEN IT'S EXPOSED TO THE NITROGEN IN THE AIR, IT EXPANDS.

A SECOND TOUCH OF THE SPRING DRIVES THE NITROGEN OUT AND DRAWS THE COSTUME BACK IN.

SHOW ME!

HANG ON! FIRST, WE HAVE SOME SUPER-SPEED TAILORING TO DO!

HERE! TRY IT ON!

ME? THIS IS FOR ME?

MAN OH MAN! I...I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY!

SAY YOU'LL TAKE GOOD CARE OF IT! AFTER ALL, IT'S IMPORTANT THAT MY PARTNER LOOK GOOD!

I WILL! I PROMISE! I...

...PARTNER?

SOMEBODY'S GOT TO KEEP YOU FROM STEALING HATS.

DING-DONG!

UH-OH!

IT'S IRIS! SHE'S MEETING BARRY AND ME FOR DINNER!

HEY! CAN YOU COME WITH US?

UMM... NO, NOT REALLY. LOOK, PRACTICE YOUR SPEED--

--BE THINKING OF A NAME FOR YOURSELF--

--AND TOMORROW WE'LL PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF!

KNOCK, KNOCK! ANYBODY HOME? NOBODY ANSWERED THE BELL, SO...

WALLY WEST! WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO?

OH... MESSING AROUND...

AND WHERE IS BARRY?

OUT CHECKING THE MAIL.

THE MAIL RUN'S AT NOON.

YEAH, WELL, I GUESS I WAS SLOW GETTING TO IT.

YOU KNOW ME.

MR. SLOW.

SORRY ABOUT THE *MESS*, MR. ALLEN. SOME JUNK KINDA GOT *KNOCKED OVER*.

NO SWEAT. FLASH ALREADY SAID SOMETHING ABOUT IT.

FLASH? YOU MEAN *HE* WAS *HERE*?

YOU BET! MR. *ALLEN* BROUGHT HIM OVER!

IS THAT *SO*? WELL, HE CERTAINLY SCOOPED *ME*, THEN!

ALL *I* BROUGHT WAS A SOUVENIR FOR YOUR *SCRAPBOOK*!

APPARENTLY, *MY* CONNECTIONS AREN'T AS *IMPRESSIVE* AS MY *FIANCÉ'S*!

I DON'T KNOW. YOU LOOK PRETTY WELL CONNECTED TO *ME*.

FLATTERER.

COME ALONG, YOU TWO! TIME'S A-WASTING, AND WALLY'S ONLY HERE FOR THE SUMMER!

WE'VE GOT SOME *SERIOUS RUNNING AROUND* TO DO, KIDDO! THINK YOU CAN *KEEP UP*?

I'LL DO MY *BEST*, AUNT IRIS...

... I'LL DO MY *BEST*.

AND I DID.

AS THE WEEKS PASSED, FLASH TOOK ME UNDER HIS WING AND TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING HE KNEW.

I EVEN HANDLED A FEW CASES SOLO. I GOT PRETTY GOOD.

KID FLASH COLLARS SILVE MASK GANG!

IN FACT, THE ONLY SERIOUS MISTAKE I MADE WAS LETTING THE NEWSPAPERS PICK A NAME FOR ME.

TOGETHER, WE WERE FLASH AND KID FLASH -- THE FASTEST TEAM ALIVE. AND TO THIS DAY, I THINK OF THAT SUMMER -- THAT PARTNERSHIP -- AS THE HAPPIEST TIME OF MY LIFE.

TOO BAD IT HAD TO END.

NEXT: RUN FOR YOUR LIFE.

BORN TO RUN!

FLASH

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

64 EARLY JUNE 92

YEAR ONE

TM

WAID

LaROCQUE

MARZAN

CHAPTER THREE

REFLECTIONS OF YOUTH!

Cover by **Greg LaRocque** and **José Marzán Jr.**

MY NAME IS WALLY WEST, AND I'M THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE.

PEOPLE CALL ME THE FLASH.

THEY HAVEN'T ALWAYS. WHEN I WAS TEN-- THE YEAR I SPENT MY SUMMER WITH AUNT IRIS -- THAT NAME BELONGED TO SOMEONE ELSE.

SOMEONE WHO PROTECTED IT-- AND THE HEROISM IT STOOD FOR--AS IF IT WERE A PRECIOUS LEGACY...

... RIGHT THROUGH TO THE END.

ONCE I GOT MY POWERS, HE WATCHED OVER ME LIKE A FATHER GUIDING HIS SON. TOGETHER, WE WERE FLASH AND KID FLASH... GUARDIANS OF CENTRAL CITY.

WE MADE A SENSATIONAL TEAM. HE TAUGHT ME EVERYTHING HE KNEW, AND I WAS A QUICK STUDY.

STILL, HE HAD ONE TRICK I JUST COULDN'T SEEM TO MASTER.

MARK WAID, STORY
GREG LA ROCQUE, PENCILS
JOSE MARZAN JR., INKS
TIM HARKINS, LETTERER
GLENN WHITMORE, COLORIST
BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITOR

FLASH YEAR ONE

CHAPTER 3

REFLECTIONS OF YOUTH!

EXPLAIN AGAIN.

AGAIN. OKAY.

EVERY OBJECT IN THIS WORLD IS MADE UP OF *MOLECULES*. BOULDERS, BULLETS...

WALLS.

WALLS. AND *PEOPLE*. NOW, BY *CONCENTRATING*, YOU AND I CAN ACTUALLY *VIBRATE* OUR MOLECULES.

BY *DOING* THIS, WE CAN MOVE *OUT OF PHASE* WITH *SOLID MATTER* AND SLIP RIGHT *THROUGH* IT!

LIKE *GHOSTS*?

NO SUCH *THING* AS GHOSTS.

EVER THE SCIENTIST.

NOW *YOU* TRY.

I'LL *START* THE VIBRATIONS. YOU KEEP THEM *GOING*, THEN MEET ME ON THE *OTHER* SIDE.

READY?

READY!

THEN GO!

HE WAS YELLING SOMETHING ENCOURAGING, BUT I COULDN'T QUITE MAKE IT OUT. IT WAS LIKE LISTENING TO SOMETHING FROM UNDER WATER.

ALL THE SOUNDS WERE MASKED BY A LOW-PITCHED HUM.

I FELT LIKE I WAS GOING TO SHAKE TO PIECES.

HE SAID TO CONCENTRATE, BUT THAT'S TOUGH WHEN IT FEELS LIKE YOU'RE HOLDING ON TO A JACKHAMMER...

I DID IT! I DID IT! DID YOU SEE?

I CAME RIGHT THROUGH THE--

I CAME RIGHT THROUGH THE--

... OR A CHAIN SAW.

oh.

I'll NEVER GET THE HANG OF THIS.

SURE YOU WILL. I TAUGHT YOU NOT TO STEAL POLICEMEN'S HATS AT SUPER-SPEED. I CAN TEACH YOU ANYTHING.

YOU'RE IMPROVING, ANYWAY. LAST TIME, YOU MADE THE WALL BLOW UP.

DON'T GET DISCOURAGED. THE VIBRATING TRICK IS TOUGH. THE SECRET'S IN KEEPING CONTROL.

OH. IS THIS THE CONTROL SPEECH AGAIN?

I'M SERIOUS, WALLY! WHEN YOU'RE MOVING AT SUPER-SPEED, YOU'RE SEEING THE WORLD IN A WAY NORMAL PEOPLE NEVER WILL. IT'S EASY TO HAVE YOUR CONCENTRATION BROKEN.

KEEP YOUR FOCUS. IF YOU CAN DO THAT--YOU CAN DO ANYTHING.

YOU'LL LEARN. I JUST WISH I HAD MORE TIME TO *TEACH* YOU.

WHEN DO YOU GO BACK *HOME*?

BOOM. TALK ABOUT A CONVERSATION STOPPER...

THIS WEEKEND. SCHOOL STARTS *MONDAY.*

I DECIDED TO CHANGE THE SUBJECT.

HEY! AUNT IRIS AND I ARE MEETING FOR *LUNCH*. CAN YOU COME *TOO*? YOU'D *LIKE* HER A *LOT*.! SHE'S REALLY *COOL*! SHE'S...

YEAH.

:sigh:

WE'VE *MET*... AND *YES*, SHE'S *TERRIFIC*. SHE'S ALSO *BARRY ALLEN'S* GIRL.

AND WHAT'S *THAT* SUPPOSED TO MEAN? BARRY'S A *NICE GUY*.!

WELL... *YEAH*... NICE AND *BORING*. NOT LIKE *YOU*. I KNOW HE'S YOUR *FRIEND* AND ALL, BUT *GEEZ*... WHAT DO YOU *SEE* IN HIM?

WE HAVE A LOT IN *COMMON*.

GIVE HIM A LITTLE MORE TIME TO *GROW* ON YOU. BARRY ALLEN MAY NOT SEEM VERY...*SPONTANEOUS*, BUT TAKE IT FROM *ME*-- HE'S *FULL* OF SURPRISES.

HE AND IRIS HAVE SOMETHING *SPECIAL* GOING. I DON'T WANT TO *COMPLICATE* IT.

I APPRECIATE THE *THOUGHT*...BUT *SKIP* THE *MATCHMAKING*, OKAY?

DREAM ON. AS WOULD-BE UNCLES WENT, BARRY WAS OKAY...BUT I WAS *DEFINITELY* IN-TERESTED IN TRADING UP.

NOW *GO*. MEET YOUR AUNT. I'LL CATCH YOU *TOMORROW* AND WE'LL GET TO WORK SOLVING THESE "*COPYCAT CRIMES*."

GOOD PLAN. THEY WERE BEGINNING TO WEAR ON HIS NERVES.

THE COPYCAT CRIMES HAD STARTED MY VERY FIRST DAY IN CENTRAL CITY.

THAT AFTERNOON, FLASH AND I HAD FOUGHT TWO IDENTICAL GANGS OF CROOKS.

THE FIRST GANG REMAINED IN CUSTODY... BUT THE POLICE WATCHED THE SECOND GANG VANISH INTO THIN AIR.

SOON AFTER, WE STARTED HEARING RELATED REPORTS FROM LOCAL BANKERS, EACH OF WHOM HAD BEEN TEMPORARILY ABDUCTED BY AN UNKNOWN PARTY. IN THEIR ABSENCE, EACH WAS BRIEFLY REPLACED WITH-- BELIEVE IT OR NOT-- AN IDENTICAL TWIN.

STANTON ACCOUNT: EMPTIED
STARK ACCOUNT: EMPTIED
STEGLER ACCOUNT EMPTIED
STERN ACCOUNT: EMPTIED

OPERATING UNDETECTED, THESE COUNTERFEIT COUNTERPARTS INFILTRATED ENTIRE COMPUTER SYSTEMS. THEY MANEUVERED MILLIONS OF DOLLARS INTO SECRET ACCOUNTS...

... BEFORE DISAPPEARING.

FLASH FELT SURE ONE OF HIS ARCHENEMIES WAS BEHIND THESE INCIDENTS, BUT HE HAD NO IDEA WHO.

PICTUR NEWS

HI, IRIS! READY FOR LUNCH?

YOW! IS IT ONE O'CLOCK ALREADY?

'FRAID I'M GOING TO BE A WHILE, KIDDO. GRAB A CHAIR AND KEEP ME COMPANY.

MY PLEASURE. NOT ONLY WAS IRIS MY AUNT, SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND.

SHE WAS ALSO--I WAS CONVINCED--AN ACCOMPLISHED MIND READER.

IRIS, I WAS WONDERING...

...WHY YOU HAVE TO GO BACK TO BLUE VALLEY?

=SIGH= WE'VE GONE OVER THIS BEFORE, SWEETHEART. WE'VE HAD ONE AWESOME SUMMER, BUT YOU NEED TO BE WITH YOUR FOLKS.

BUT...

BUT WHAT?

I DON'T LOVE THEM AS MUCH AS I LOVE YOU.

YES, YOU DO. YOU JUST DON'T REALIZE IT.

TRUST ME IN THIS, WALLY. THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME.

SURE THERE IS. PRISON... HELL...

LET'S TALK ABOUT SOMETHING ELSE.

I WISH. NO, THIS ONE'S ON ELDON GARRETT. RECOGNIZE THE NAME?

OKAY. YOU WORKING ON ANOTHER STORY ABOUT THE COPYCAT CRIMES?

I DID A SCHOOL REPORT ON HIM. HE'S A PHYZA... PHYSIS...

PHYSICIST. HE'S IN TOWN THIS AFTERNOON TO STUDY SOME OF THE OLD AND RARE SCIENCE BOOKS THE MAIN LIBRARY HAS ACQUIRED.

SOUNDS POSITIVELY SNOOZERIFIC.

THAT'S WHAT I SAID, BUT AN ASSIGNMENT'S AN ASSIGNMENT.

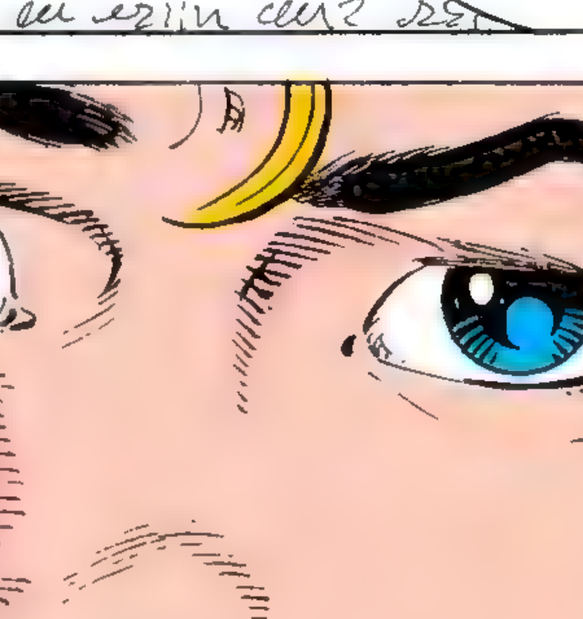
IS THIS GARRETT'S PICTURE?

YEP.

IT'S ALL GOOFED UP.

GOOFED UP? HOW?

HERE. I READ FOR MY REPORT WHERE HE'S BLIND IN HIS LEFT EYE, NOT HIS RIGHT ONE.



HOW WEIRD. MAYBE THE PHOTO LAB ACCIDENTALLY FLOPPED THE PICTURE.

FLOPPED IT?

IT'S A PHOTOGRAPHER'S TERM. IT MEANS THEY PRINTED IT BACKWARDS... TURNED IT INTO A MIRROR IMAGE.

BING.

THAT'S STRANGE, THOUGH... THE WORD "LIBRARY" ISN'T BACKWARDS...

BING BING BING BING

AND SUDDENLY I HAD IT.

WHOEVER WAS BEHIND THE COPYCAT CRIMES WASN'T CREATING TWIN COUNTERPARTS.

HE WAS CREATING MIRROR IMAGES.

I HAVE TO FINISH THIS UP, KIDDO. IF YOU'RE BORED, YOU CAN RUN AROUND OUTSIDE FOR A LITTLE WHILE...

GOOD IDEA.

MIRROR IMAGES HAD TO BE THE WORK OF THE MIRROR MASTER -- ONE OF CENTRAL CITY'S NASTIER CRIMINALS.

I WANTED TO TELL THE FLASH RIGHT AWAY. I COULDN'T REACH HIM DIRECTLY, THOUGH. HE STILL HADN'T TOLD ME HIS TRUE IDENTITY.

HE'D TOLD ME THAT, IN AN EMERGENCY, I COULD CONTACT HIM THROUGH BARRY.

HELLO, FLASH?

OH. BARRY. YOU SOUNDED LIKE... NEVER MIND. LISTEN, IS THE FLASH THERE?

ON THE OTHER HAND, HE'D ALSO ORDERED ME NEVER TO REVEAL THAT I WAS KID FLASH.

HOW COME? I CAN'T REALLY SAY... YES, SIR, I KNOW HE'S A BUSY MAN...

PHONE PHONE PHONE

THIS MADE MY HEAD HURT ONLY SOMETIMES.

EVENTUALLY, I CONVINCED BARRY TO HAVE FLASH MEET ME IN FRONT OF THE LIBRARY. THEN I WENT INTO ACTION.

IF MY HUNCH WAS CORRECT... I HAD TO GET A MOVE ON.

I GOT TO THE LIBRARY JUST IN THE NICK OF TIME."ELDON GARRETT" WAS--AS I'D SUSPECTED--ANOTHER OF THE MIRROR MASTER'S IMPOSTORS.

IN SECONDS, I'D HAVE THIS GUY BAGGED.

SOMEBODY STOP HIM! THOSE VOLUMES ARE WORTH A FORTUNE!

BUT THEN I GOT ANOTHER IDEA.

UNLIKE THE PSEUDO-BANKERS--WHO HAD DONE THEIR DIRTY WORK VIA COMPUTER--THIS IMPOSTOR WAS ACTUALLY CARRYING STOLEN GOODS.

HE WAS TAKING THEM TO HIS BOSS.

AND IF I SHADOWED HIM... HE'D TAKE ME THERE, TOO.

I WAS TORN. THE FLASH MIGHT ARRIVE AT ANY SECOND. I COULD WAIT FOR HIM--BUT I'D LOSE THE CAR.

YET IF I LEFT, FLASH WOULDN'T KNOW TO FOLLOW ME. I HAD NO WAY OF MARKING MY TRAIL.

UNLESS...

THE ROBBERY HAD HAPPENED SO FAST, THE COPS HAD BEEN UNABLE TO CATCH UP.

BY THE TIME "GARRETT" HAD GOTTEN THIS FAR OUT, HE'D EVADED ALL PURSUIT.

ALL POLICE PURSUIT.

THEN, IN A WINK, HE DISAPPEARED--CAR AND ALL.

MAYBE I WAS SUPPOSED TO BE SURPRISED BY HIS VANISHING ACT, BUT I KNEW I WAS DEALING WITH A MASTER OF ILLUSION.

IT WAS A CLEVER SETUP...

... A HIDEOUT CONCEALED BY A RING OF MIRRORS THAT REFLECTED THE SURROUNDING FIELD.

I DECIDED TO GO INSIDE. MAYBE I SHOULD HAVE WAITED FOR FLASH TO JOIN ME...

HEY, FRANK.! WHERE'S YOUR HAT?

... BUT I FIGURED HE'D BE ALONG SHORTLY.

IN AN ANTEROOM, I SAW THE IMAGING CHAMBER HE'D USED TO CREATE HIS MIRROR-DUPLICATES.

FURTHER IN, I SAW THE MAIN MAN HIMSELF.

I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO DO. FOR THE FIRST TIME SINCE I'D BECOME KID FLASH, I WAS REALLY SCARED. THE MIRROR MASTER WAS NO PETTY THIEF.

HE WAS SERIOUSLY DANGEROUS. THE THINGS HE COULD DO WITH ORDINARY MIRRORS REDEFINED THE WORD IMPOSSIBLE.

STILL, I THOUGHT I'D BE SAFE UNTIL FLASH SHOWED UP.

WHAT--?

I WAS WRONG.

"COME TO MY ARMS, MY BEAMISH BOY!

" OH, FRABJOUS DAY! CALLOOH! CALLAY! HE CHORTLED IN HIS JOY!"

RECOGNIZE THE QUOTE? YOU SHOULD! IT'S FROM MY FAVORITE BOOK:

THROUGH THE LOOKING GLASS!

AH HAHAHA!

I'M SURPRISED! I THOUGHT FLASH WOULD BE FIRST TO FIND ME -- NOT KID FLASH!

STILL, WITH YOU HERE, HE CAN'T BE FAR BEHIND, CAN HE?

I'D HOPED TO LURE HIM HERE MYSELF-- BUT NOW YOU'VE DONE THAT FOR ME!

I POUNDED AND POUNDED ON THE GLASS, BUT I COULDN'T BREAK FREE. I WAS BEING HELD CAPTIVE IN SOME SORT OF BIZARRE MIRROR DIMENSION.

ALL I COULD DO WAS WATCH HELPLESSLY AS THE MIRROR MASTER LAID A DEATHTRAP FOR THE FLASH.

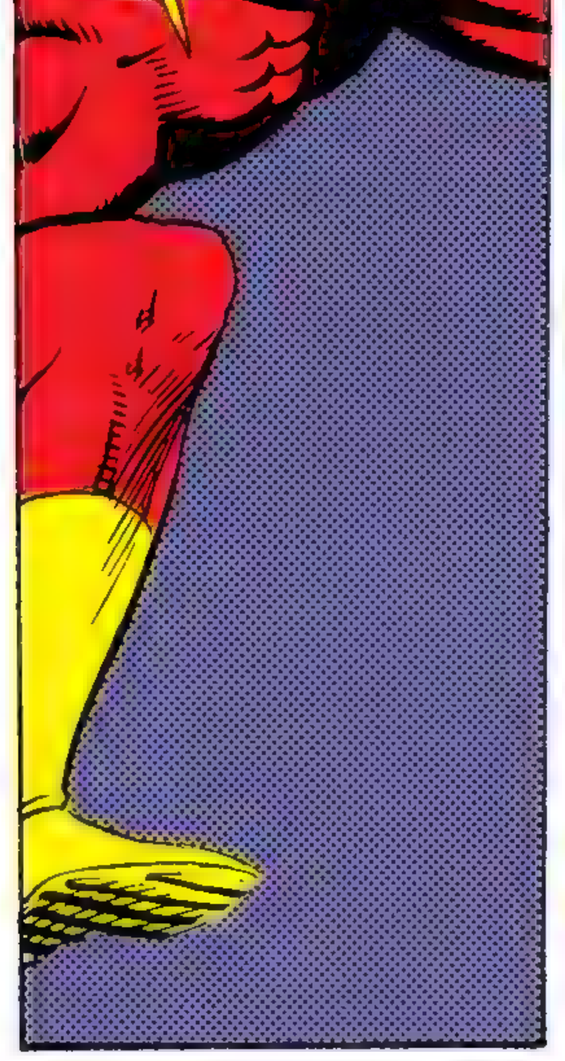
ALL DONE! OH, DON'T WORRY. THE *MIRROR* WON'T HURT HIM. IT'S ONLY *BAIT.*

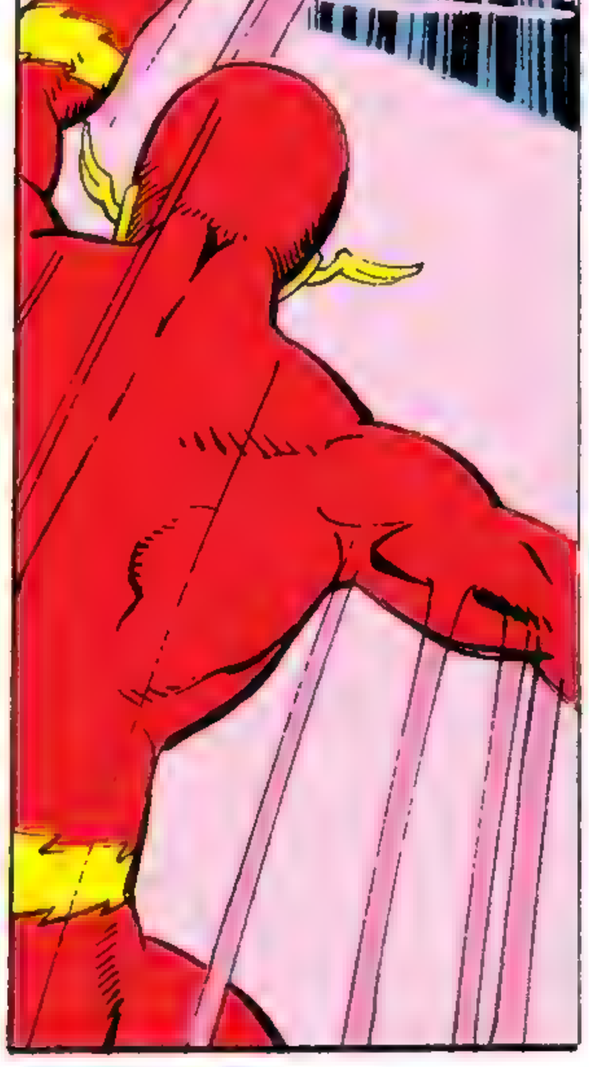
IT'S THE *METAL FLOORING* THAT'S THE *DANGER.* IT'S WIRED WITH 50,000 *VOLTS!*

WHEN YOUR PAL COMES THROUGH THAT *DOOR,* HE'LL HEAD STRAIGHT TOWARDS MY *REFLECTION,* STEP ON THE *ELECTRIFIED PLATE,* AND-- *BZZZZT!*--SAUSAGE CITY!

DON'T CLOSE YOUR *EYES!* YOU WON'T WANT TO MISS A *MINUTE!*

NO ONE WILL BE *SEATED* DURING THE *SHOCKING CLIMAX!*





A CLIMAX CAPTURED FOR POSTERITY IN A LITTLE MAGIC MIRROR. BEAUTIFUL!

NO!

NOOOO!!!

I WAS DEVASTATED. HE WAS DEAD-- AND IT WAS MY FAULT. I'D LED HIM RIGHT INTO MIRROR MASTER'S TRAP.

I KILLED THE FLASH.

HE WAS GONE--AND THERE WAS ONLY ONE THING LEFT FOR ME TO DO.

FOCUS.

ON REVENGE.

I FLEW OUT OF THAT MIRROR LIKE A CRIMSON COMET. I WASN'T SCARED ANY-MORE.

I WAS FURIOUS.

FAST AND FURIOUS.

SPA-TEEEK

WE BOTH SAW RED.

HE NEVER KNEW WHAT HIT HIM.

HE ALSO NEVER KNEW HOW CLOSE HE CAME TO NEVER WAKING UP.

WAP WAP

WAP WAP WAP

I THINK HE GOT THE MESSAGE.

WHOA.

FLASH!

YOU... YOU'RE ALIVE! BUT... HOW...?

WELL, A GOOD MAGICIAN NEVER REVEALS HIS *SECRETS*, BUT *YOU* I'LL *TELL*:

I DID IT WITH *MIRRORS*.

"I GOT HERE RIGHT AFTER YOU-- JUST IN TIME TO OVERHEAR THE MIRROR MASTER'S *LONG-WINDED BRAGGADOCIO*.

"I HAD TO GET YOU FREE-- BUT I KNEW HIS GUARD WOULDN'T BE DOWN UNTIL HE'D SPRUNG HIS TRAP.

"BY STUDYING THE *IMAGING DEVICE* AT SUPER-SPEED, I LEARNED HOW TO SEND A MIRROR-FLASH IN AHEAD OF ME.

"WHAT I DIDN'T FIGURE WAS THAT YOU'D FREE YOURSELF. NICE WORK."

THANKS. SO YOU WERE ABLE TO FOLLOW MY *TRAIL* OKAY?

OH YEAH.

YOU KNOW, FOR A KID WHO JUST BROUGHT DOWN A *SUPER-VILLAIN* ALL BY *HIMSELF*, YOU DON'T *LOOK* TOO HOT.

I'M... *OKAY*. THAT... *VIBRATION* STUFF I *DID* IT ALL RIGHT, BUT IT MADE ME FEEL ALL... *WEIRD* INSIDE. *JUMPY*, KIND OF.

MAYBE YOU SHOULD TAKE IT *EASY*, THEN.

NO *WAY*! SUMMER'S ALMOST *GONE*! I'M NOT GONNA MISS ANOTHER *MINUTE* OF BEING *KID FLASH*!

HEY! NOBODY'S ASKING YOU TO GIVE *THAT* UP JUST BECAUSE YOU'RE GOING *HOME*!

FROM WHERE *I* SIT, IT LOOKS TO *ME* LIKE YOU'VE GOT A *LONG* AND *HAPPY CAREER* AHEAD OF YOU.

FAMOUS LAST WORDS.

AAAAHH!

WALLY!

ALL OF A SUDDEN, I WAS WRACKED WITH PAIN. I SEIZED UP LIKE AN ENGINE WITHOUT OIL.

IT WAS HORRIBLE.

FLASH HAD NO IDEA HOW TO HELP ME. IN DESPERATION, HE TOOK ME IN FOR A PHYSICAL EXAM.

I WASN'T IMPRESSED BY HIS CHOICE OF DOCTORS.

ARE YOU NUTS? THIS IS MY OWN GRANDFATHER! WON'T HE FIGURE OUT WHO I REALLY AM?

WALLY, IRA WEST IS THE ORIGINAL ABSENT-MINDED PROFESSOR. YOU COULD TAKE YOUR MASK OFF AND HUG HIM AND HE MIGHT NOT RECOGNIZE YOU.

THAT ASIDE, HE'S STILL ONE OF THE MOST BRILLIANT SCIENTISTS I KNOW. WHEN I TURNED SUPER-FAST, I CAME TO HIM FOR ADVICE AND HELP.

HE MAY NOT KNOW MY REAL NAME... BUT HE KNOWS EVEN MORE THAN I DO ABOUT HOW OUR POWERS WORK.

LET ME SEE IF I HAVE THIS STRAIGHT. SOME MONTHS AGO, A BATH OF ELECTRIFIED CHEMICALS GAVE YOU INCREDIBLE ABILITIES IN A BILLION-TO-ONE CHANCE ACCIDENT.

NOW YOU TELL ME THE EXACT SAME THING HAPPENED TO THIS YOUNG MAN? THAT HE, TOO, WAS STRUCK BY LIGHTNING?

YOU DON'T BELIEVE ME?

WELL, SEEING THE RESULTS, I DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE... OTHER THAN TO WONDER IF SOME HIGHER FORCE ISN'T AT WORK... OR IF YOU YOURSELF AREN'T SOMEHOW RESPONSIBLE...

ME? IN WHAT WAY?

JUST A RANDOM THOUGHT. WE'LL PICK IT UP *LATER*. EITHER WAY, FLASH, WHEN *YOUR* ACCIDENT HAPPENED, THOSE CHEMICALS INTERACTED WITH YOUR *ADULT BODY* TO GIVE YOU *SUPER-SPEED*.

BUT THE *BODY CHEMISTRY* OF A *TEN-YEAR-OLD* IS *MUCH DIFFERENT* FROM THAT OF A *GROWN MAN*.

FROM WHAT YOU'VE *TOLD* ME, KID FLASH'S POWERS TOOK LONGER TO *KICK IN*... WEEKS TO *FULLY MANIFEST*.

APPARENTLY, MASTERING THESE... *VIBRATIONS* WAS THE FINAL STEP. THEY SERVED TO *FINE-TUNE* HIS ABILITIES -- *TEMPER* THEM, IF YOU WILL.

AT THE *SAME TIME*, THOUGH, THEY'VE ALTERED THE BOY'S *PHYSIOLOGY* RATHER *DRASTICALLY*... AND *TRAGICALLY*.

SEE? HIS *MUSCLES* AND *TISSUES* ARE *REJECTING* THE POWER! NOW, EVEN THE *SLIGHTEST* USE OF HIS *SPEED* CAUSES HIM *TREMENDOUS PAIN*!

UNNNHHH!

SON, I HATE TO *TELL* YOU THIS... BUT YOUR *RUNNING DAYS* ARE *OVER*. NEAR AS I CAN TELL, IF YOU EVER USE YOUR POWERS *AGAIN*...

...THEY'LL *KILL* YOU!

NEXT: LIVE FAST... DIE YOUNG!

BORN TO RUN!

FLASH

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

YEAR ONE

65
LATE JUNE 87

TM

WAID
LaROCQUE
MARZAN

CHAPTER FOUR

LIVE FAST, DIE YOUNG!

Cover by **Greg LaRocque** and **José Marzán Jr.**

TIME IS THE ENEMY.

IT CAN NEVER BE BEATEN... THOUGH AT TEN, I THOUGHT I'D OUTWITTED IT WHEN AN ELECTRICAL EXPLOSION GAVE ME THE POWER TO RUN FASTER THAN SOUND... FASTER THAN LIGHTNING.

AT THOSE SPEEDS, TIME WAS NO LONGER AN ISSUE. THE SUMMER I SPENT AS KID FLASH CRAWLED BY... AND I SAVORED EVERY WONDERFUL SECOND OF IT.

BUT TIME FINALLY GOT ITS REVENGE.

IT CAUGHT UP WITH ME.

FLASH: YEAR ONE
BORN TO RUN!
chapter 4
LIVE FAST... DIE YOUNG!

MARK WAID, STORY GREG LA ROCQUE, PENCILS
JOSE MARZAN, JR., INKS TIM HARKINS, LETTERS
GLENN WHITMORE, COLORS BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITS
FRANK PITTARESE, ASSISTANT EDITOR

NO SOONER HAD I FINALLY MASTERED MY POWERS THAN--WITHOUT WARNING--THEY BEGAN CAUSING ME UNBEARABLE PAIN.

FLASH COULDN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT MY GRANDFATHER IRA -- WHO, WITH TWO NOBEL PRIZES UNDER HIS BELT, WAS SOMEONE TO LISTEN TO -- HAD A THEORY.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE BODY CHEMISTRY OF A TEN-YEAR-OLD WAS RADICALLY DIFFERENT FROM THAT OF A GROWN MAN.

GRAMPA'S BEST GUESS WAS THAT MY MUSCLES AND TISSUES WERE REJECTING ALL THE STRAIN MY SPEED PUT ON THEM.

HE TOLD FLASH NOT TO LET ME RUN ANYMORE. THAT IF I DID, IT WOULD PROBABLY KILL ME.

AT THAT POINT, I'M NOT SURE I WOULD HAVE MINDED.

I FELT DEAD INSIDE ALREADY.

IT WAS OVER. EVERYTHING WAS OVER. WITH SUMMER GONE, AUNT IRIS HAD TO TAKE ME BACK HOME TO BLUE VALLEY.

THE ONLY SURPRISE THAT DAY WAS THAT HER FIANCÉ BARRY STOPPED BY TO SEE ME OFF.

SINCE I'D SPENT MOST OF MY SPARE TIME WITH FLASH, I HADN'T GOTTEN TO KNOW BARRY REAL WELL.

GIFTS

STILL, HE TOLD ME HE WAS REALLY SORRY TO SEE ME GO.

WALLY, LOOK AT THOSE *CLOUDS*! MUST BE *SOME STORM* BREWING UP, *huh*?

I GUESS.

SO... YOU HAD A GOOD *TIME* THIS SUMMER?

YOU DON'T KNOW THE *HALF* OF IT.

BOY, I KNOW TWO PEOPLE WHO CAN'T WAIT TO SEE *YOU*! I BET YOUR FOLKS REALLY *MISSED* HAVING YOU *AROUND*. I KNOW I WILL!

THEN HOW COME... HOW C-COME...

Oh, HONEY...

I KNOW IT'S TOUGH. IF IT WERE UP TO *ME*, WE'D BE TOGETHER *EVERY DAY*.

BUT IT'S TIME FOR YOU TO BE WITH YOUR *PARENTS*. THEY *DO* LOVE YOU, YOU KNOW.

I DON'T *BELIEVE* YOU.

YOU'RE MY *BEST FRIEND*. I WOULDN'T *LIE* TO YOU.

BUT I WON'T TELL YOU THEY'RE EASY TO *LIVE* WITH, EITHER.

SOMETIMES YOU REMIND ME *SO MUCH* OF YOUR FATHER WHEN *HE* WAS YOUR AGE. YOU KNOW, HE AND DADDY WEREN'T CLOSE *EITHER*.

RUDY WAS *SO AFRAID* OF BEING *HURT* BY THE THINGS DADDY SAID AND DID THAT HE BUILT *WALLS* AROUND HIS *OWN* FEELINGS.

...*TORNADO WATCH* UNTIL 3:00 FOR THE FOLLOWING COUNTIES...

HE THOUGHT THAT WOULD *PROTECT* HIM FROM DADDY, BUT ALL IT DID WAS *SEPARATE* THEM... PROBABLY *FOREVER*.

DON'T MAKE THAT SAME *MISTAKE*, WALLY.

YOU AND YOUR *DAD* HAVE A LOT TO *WORK OUT*. MAYBE THIS TIME *APART* WILL HAVE *HELPED*. MAYBE *NOT*. BUT YOU HAVE TO *FIND OUT*.

:*Sniff*: WHY CAN'T I JUST STAY WITH *YOU*?

BECAUSE THAT WOULDN'T *SOLVE* ANYTHING. YOU CAN'T *RUN AWAY* FROM YOUR *PROBLEMS*, SWEETHEART.

IF YOU *DO*, THEY'LL JUST GET *WORSE*.

I CAN'T *DO* THIS.

YOU CAN DO *ANYTHING*. YOU'RE *MY NEPHEW*, AFTER ALL. MY *FAVORITE* NEPHEW.

YOUR *ONLY* NEPHEW.

A *TECHNICALITY*. HELLO, MARY! WHERE'S MY *BROTHER*?

STILL AT WORK! I'VE GOT SOME COFFEE ON IF YOU'D LIKE TO COME IN AND WAIT FOR HIM.'

THANKS... BUT IF ONE OF THOSE *MIDWEST THUNDERBOOMERS* IS BLOWING IN, I'D BETTER BLOW OUT.'

YOU GONNA BE *OKAY*, KIDDO? YOU WON'T *FORGET* ABOUT ME? YOU'LL REMEMBER ALL THE THINGS WE *TALKED* ABOUT?

I WILL. I PROMISE.

AND WITH THAT, MY RACE WAS RUN.

FOR ONE SUMMER, I'D BEEN SPECIAL.

NOW I WAS JUST ANOTHER TEN-YEAR-OLD.

I WANTED TO GET *USED* TO LIVING IN A *SLOW WORLD*, SO I OFFERED TO HELP MOM WITH HER CHORES. IT WAS A *MISTAKE*.

EVERY MOMENT OF EVERY TEDIOUS TASK WAS AN ETERNITY.

WORSE, JUST *LISTENING* TO HER TALK WAS AN EXERCISE IN FRUSTRATION. EACH WORD SEEMED SO DRAWN OUT AND DELIBERATE.

AFTER A WHILE, ALL I COULD HEAR WAS THE *METHODICAL* TICKING OF THE GRANDFATHER CLOCK IN THE HALL.

THE ONLY THING I DIDN'T HAVE TO WAIT FOR THAT AFTERNOON WAS FOR DAD TO COME HOME.

HELLO, MARY!

WELL, HELLO YOURSELF! YOU'RE HOME EARLY! COME TO SAY HI TO YOUR BOY?

HELLO, SON.

NO, THAT TORNADO WATCH GOT ITSELF TURNED INTO A WARNING, SO THE BOSS CLOSED SHOP FOR THE DAY.

NOW I'M OUT AN AFTERNOON'S WORK, AND...

WALLY, BE CAREFUL!

TSSHH!

:SIGH: THAT WAS ONE OF YOUR MOTHER'S FAVORITES. STOP FOOLING AROUND, SON! PAY ATTENTION TO WHAT YOU'RE...

I'M SORRY, OKAY? I'M REALLY SORRY!!

WALLY, WAIT! I... COME BACK HERE!

LIKE I DIDN'T FEEL BAD ENOUGH ALREADY. LAST WEEK I COULD PASS A CONCORDE LIKE IT WAS STANDING STILL.

SLAM!

FLASH YS GRODD

NOW I COULDN'T EVEN CATCH A STUPID PLATE.

IT WASN'T JUST DAD I WAS ANGRY WITH. IT WAS THE WHOLE WORLD... STARTING WITH IRIS. SHE SAID SHE WAS MY BEST FRIEND, BUT HOW COULD SHE BE?

I COULDN'T TELL HER ANYTHING. HOW COULD I SHOW HER WHAT A BULLET LOOKS LIKE WHEN YOU'RE MOVING FAST ENOUGH TO CATCH IT?

OR TELL HER THE THINGS YOU HEAR ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE SOUND BARRIER?

OR GET HER TO UNDERSTAND HOW COLD AND EMPTY IT FELT TO BE SLOW AGAIN?

IT WASN'T FAIR.

I'D BEEN GIVEN THE GIFT OF A LIFETIME...

...JUST TO HAVE IT SNATCHED AWAY.

AND THERE WAS NO FORGETTING ABOUT IT, NO WAY TO LET IT GO.

EVERYTHING AROUND ME WAS A REMINDER.

I THOUGHT ABOUT IRIS AND HER STUPID PAT ANSWERS. IRIS AND HER PEP TALKS.

SHE SAID I COULDN'T RUN AWAY FROM MY PROBLEMS.

SON? COME ON OUT! THIS WEATHER'S TURNING *UGLY*! WE MIGHT OUGHT TO HOLE UP IN THE *BASEMENT* FOR A LITTLE WHILE!

KNOCK! KNOCK!

SON?

SHE WAS WRONG.

WALLY!

I'D DONE SMARTER THINGS, OF COURSE.

BLUE VALLEY, NEBRASKA WAS NO METROPOLIS. YOU COULD THROW A ROCK FROM END TO END WITHOUT HALF TRYING.

HARD TO HIDE IN A TOWN LIKE THAT.

I WANTED TO LEAVE, BUT I DIDN'T KNOW WHERE TO GO.

ON THE ROAD TO NOWHERE, I'D GOTTEN AS FAR AS OLD MAN CRENSHAW'S FIELD BEFORE THE RAIN BECAME A DOWNPOUR.

I FIGURED THAT WAS AS GOOD A PLACE AS ANY TO RIDE OUT THE STORM.

SWOP!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT SHOCKED ME MORE.

THAT HE FOUND ME, OR THAT HE ACTUALLY KNEW HOW TO CLIMB A TREE.

COME ON HOME, WALLY! THIS IS A DANGEROUS PLACE FOR YOU TO BE RIGHT NOW!

DOESN'T MATTER.

IT DOES MATTER! I DON'T NEED YOU BREAKING A LEG. I DON'T WANT TO HAVE TO TAKE YOU TO THE HOSPITAL.

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN? THAT YOU DON'T WANT ME BOTHERING YOU?

WHY ARE YOU SO MEAN TO ME?

LOOK, WE DON'T HAVE TIME FOR THIS POOR, POOR, PUTUPON WALLY THING! YOU'RE MY SON AND YOU'RE COMING WITH ME!

YOU DON'T CARE ABOUT ME!

OF COURSE I CARE! I'M OUT HERE, AREN'T I?

I'M NOT GOING!

IT'S NOT OPEN FOR DISCUSSION!

NO! I WON'T LIVE WITH YOU!

I DON'T LOVE YOU!

WHAT?

I SAID, I DON'T--

BRA-KOOM

UNNGH!

I WAS FORTUNATE. THERE WERE ENOUGH LEAVES AND BRANCHES UNDERNEATH ME TO CUSHION MY FALL.

DAD WASN'T SO LUCKY.

HE WAS PINNED. I TRIED MOVING THE BRANCH, BUT IT WAS TOO HEAVY.

DAD! DAD, GET UP!

HE COULDN'T HEAR ME. I COULDN'T HEAR ME. MY EARS WERE FILLED WITH A FRIGHTENING ROAR THAT SOUNDED LIKE THE END OF THE WORLD.

WHEN I TURNED TO SEE WHERE IT WAS COMING FROM, I STOPPED BEING SCARED...

...AND STARTED BEING TERRIFIED.

TORNADO WINDS MOVE OVER 300 MILES AN HOUR. THEY'LL SHRED A HOUSE EASIER THAN YOU CAN TEAR A CANDY WRAPPER.

IRIS HAD BEEN RIGHT AFTER ALL. RUNNING AWAY ALWAYS MAKES THINGS WORSE.

IF WE'D BEEN AT HOME, WE MIGHT HAVE BEEN SAFE. OUT IN THE OPEN... WE DIDN'T HAVE A PRAYER.

I'D NEVER FELT SO HELPLESS. I WANTED TO RUN AWAY AGAIN, BUT I COULDN'T.

THERE WASN'T ANYWHERE TO GO.

ONCE UPON A TIME, I'D SEEN TELEVISION FOOTAGE OF THE FLASH STOPPING A TWISTER.

HE RAN CLOCKWISE AROUND THE FUNNEL SO FAST THAT THE WIND IN HIS WAKE CANCELLED IT OUT.

ALL I COULD DO WAS TRY.

IF FLASH COULD DO IT...THEN MAYBE KID FLASH COULD, TOO.

IT WASN'T A TERRIFICALLY NOBLE DECISION. I WAS GOING TO DIE ONE WAY OR ANOTHER.

BUT AT LEAST I WOULDN'T DIE ALONE.

NOT WITH THE SPIRIT OF THE FLASH WATCHING OVER ME.

IT WAS HOPELESS. BETWEEN THE WIND AND THE PAIN, I COULDN'T BUILD UP ANY SPEED.

I FELT LIKE A PUPPET WHOSE STRINGS WERE BEING JERKED EVERY WHICH WAY. I COULDN'T EVEN KEEP MY FEET ON THE GROUND.

AND THOUGH I'D COUNTED ON MY AURA TO GIVE ME PROTECTION, IT WAS USELESS AGAINST ALL THE FLYING DEBRIS.

I WAS A TADPOLE SWIMMING AGAINST THE TIDE--AND STRAIGHT INTO THE RAZORED MAW OF A SHARK.

ALL MY FAULT.

BECAUSE I'D RUN AWAY, THIS WAS ALL MY FAULT.

IRIS WOULD KNOW... AND SHE'D BE ASHAMED OF ME.

I TRIED AGAIN. I FORCED EACH AND EVERY BURNING STEP.

LONG-DISTANCE RUNNERS KNOW THE FEELING. THEY CALL IT "HITTING THE WALL"... WHEN THEY'VE REACHED THE POINT WHERE ALL THE FUEL IN THEIR BODY IS SPENT.

DRIVEN BEYOND THE LIMIT OF HUMAN ENDURANCE, THEY'RE SUDDENLY WRACKED WITH PAIN. MOST COLLAPSE.

BUT THE STRONG ONES KEEP PUSHING... KEEP PUMPING THEIR ARMS AND LEGS UNTIL THEY BREAK DOWN THAT WALL AND GET THEIR SECOND WIND.

AS I BARRELED AROUND THAT TWISTER, MY CHEST FILLED WITH BROKEN GLASS, I PRAYED THAT GRAMPA HAD BEEN WRONG-- THAT I WASN'T FINISHED BEING KID FLASH.

THAT JUST LIKE A MARATHON RUNNER, I TOO HAD HIT A WALL.

AND THAT I COULD FIND THE STRENGTH TO MAKE IT TO THE OTHER SIDE BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE.

THE TWISTER WAS ALMOST ON US.

IN LESS THAN A MINUTE, IT WOULD PICK DAD UP AND THROW HIM INTO THE HEAVENS LIKE A RAG DOLL.

I TASTED BLOOD AS I BIT MY LIP AND TRIED NOT TO SCREAM.

I WANTED TO FALL DOWN OR THROW UP OR BOTH.

OR JUST COAST, AND LET MY MOMENTUM CARRY ME TO SAFETY.

BUT I COULDN'T LEAVE DAD.

I'D MADE A PROMISE... TO ALWAYS HELP PEOPLE IN NEED.

EVEN DAD.

ESPECIALLY DAD.

HE WAS MY FATHER...

... AND I LOVED HIM.

AND THE MOMENT I REALIZED THAT, I DIDN'T JUST BREAK THROUGH THE WALL...

KA-RAK

... I DEMOLISHED IT.

NO ONE IN BLUE VALLEY KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HAPPENED THAT AFTERNOON, BUT EVERYONE REMEMBERS TO THIS DAY.

THEY REMEMBER HEARING THE RELENTLESS RHYTHM OF POUNDING THUNDER.

ONLY I KNEW WHAT THEY WERE HEARING WASN'T THUNDERCLAPS.

IT WAS SONIC BOOMS.

I CAME UP ON THAT TWISTER DOING HALF THE SPEED OF LIGHT AND WATCHED IT UNRAVEL LIKE CHEAP CLOTH.

THEN I CUT THROUGH THE TREE LIMB LIKE A STRAW IN A HURRICANE.

IT TOOK DAD ANOTHER SECOND TO WAKE UP..

...PLENTY OF TIME TO CHANGE.

SON? SON, ARE =KOFF= ARE YOU OKAY ?

I'M GREAT. LET'S GET YOU OUT OF HERE BEFORE THIS STORM ACTS UP AGAIN.

I WOULDN'T WORRY TOO MUCH, KID. I THINK WE'RE SAFE.

YOU... OOOF.. YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY...

...LIGHTNING NEVER STRIKES TWICE IN THE SAME PLACE.

BUT IT *DID.*

DID *WHAT?*

OH, HI.

LIGHTNING. RANDOM LIGHTNING. ON A STORMY AFTERNOON, IT BOLTS INTO A *LABORATORY* TO GIVE THE GIFT OF *SUPER-SPEED*... NOT *ONCE* BUT *TWICE.*

FIRST TO *FLASH*, THEN TO *ME.*

THE ODDS ARE *INCALCULABLE.* DID IT *REALLY HAPPEN* JUST LIKE *THAT?* HOW *COULD* IT HAVE?

I WASN'T *THERE.* YOU TELL *ME.*

PERSONALLY, I'VE ALWAYS BELIEVED THAT WHEN *FLASH* WAS HIT, IT MADE HIM *MORE THAN HUMAN* -- GAVE HIM ABILITIES THAT *DEFIED* COMPREHENSION.

AFTER I SAW WHAT HE COULD *DO*, I SPENT AN ENTIRE *MONTH* WORKING OUT THE SCIENCE *BEHIND* HIS POWERS.

THOSE I *COULD* EXPLAIN BENT THE LAWS OF PHYSICS TO THE *BREAKING POINT.*

IN *TURN*, IT'S *POSSIBLE* THAT THE ACCIDENT THAT GAVE *YOU* YOUR SPEED WAS NOTHING MORE THAN THE MOST *REMARKABLE COINCIDENCE IN HISTORY.*

ON THE OTHER HAND, I OFTEN WONDER IF BARRY HIMSELF DIDN'T SUBCONSCIOUSLY *CAUSE* IT TO HAPPEN... SOMEHOW.

NO WAY. COULD HE HAVE DONE THAT? WOULDN'T HE HAVE SAID SOMETHING?

THINK. HOW OFTEN DID HE PONDER THE IMPROBABILITY OF THE THINGS HE DEALT WITH AS THE FLASH?

SLOW DOWN

TAKE THE TIME TO READ A BOOK.

TRUE. WHEN YOU SPEND ALL YOUR TIME FIGHTING GENIUS GORILLAS AND BREAKING THE TIME BARRIER, I GUESS THAT AUTOMATICALLY ADJUSTS YOUR DEFINITION OF THE WORD INCREDIBLE.

SO WE'LL NEVER KNOW THE WHOLE STORY, WILL WE?

WE KNOW THE PARTS THAT REALLY MATTER.

WHY AM I IN HERE AGAIN?

YOU WERE BRINGING ME SOME COFFEE, BUT I'VE GOT TO BE GOING...

AH. COFFEE. CREAM, NO SUGAR?

SUGAR, NO CREAM. BUT...

IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE WE'VE VISITED. YOU'LL STAY FOR DINNER?

NO!

I MEAN -- IT'S JUST--

Oh, NICE. WHY DON'T I JUST STICK A KNIFE IN HIS HEART AND DO IT UP RIGHT?

IT'S OKAY, WALLY. I DIDN'T MEAN TO KEEP YOU.

IT'S... CAN I TELL YOU SOMETHING? AND BE HONEST?

PLEASE.

...BUT IRIS TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE WALLY WEST.

IT'S HARD BEING HERE BECAUSE YOU REMIND ME OF HER.

OF IRIS?

uh-huh. WHENEVER I SEE YOU, ALL I CAN THINK ABOUT IS THAT I NEVER GOT TO SAY GOODBYE TO HER.

SHE DIED SO SUDDENLY AND SO POINTLESSLY. SO DID BARRY, BUT I'VE MANAGED TO MAKE SOME PEACE WITH THAT.

WHEN I GREW UP, I TOOK HIS COSTUME AND NAME TO HONOR HIS MEMORY. I JUST WISH I HAD SOME WAY TO HONOR HERS. BARRY MAY HAVE TAUGHT ME HOW TO BE KID FLASH...

YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT HER AS IF SHE'S REALLY GONE.

AND?

AND SHE'S NOT.

SHE'S IN YOU.

YOUR OLD GRANDDAD HAS A HARD TIME REMEMBERING EVERYTHING... BUT I WON'T EVER FORGET HOW PROUD IRIS WAS THE DAY SHE LEARNED YOUR SECRET. AND AFTER. AND BEFORE.

SOMETIMES YOU'RE ALL SHE'D TALK ABOUT.

SOMETIMES YOU'RE ALL I CAN TALK ABOUT.

AND NOW, WHEN I LOOK AT YOU, I SEE HER SPARKLE.

YOU REMIND ME OF HER TOO, WALLY... AND I'M GLAD.

SIT DOWN. I'LL COOK, YOU TALK. HOW ABOUT LASAGNA?

THAT WAS HER FAVORITE.

I KNOW.

DO YOU HAVE TIME FOR THIS?

I HAVE ALL THE TIME IN THE WORLD.

LOVE YOU, GRAMPA.

I LOVE YOU TOO, WALLY.

END.

THE RACE YOU DEMANDED!

FLASH®

VS. AQUAMAN®

66
JUL 92

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

...NOT!

WARNING!
THIS SCENE DOES *NOT* APPEAR IN THIS ISSUE!

WAID
—
COLLINS
—
RICHARDSON

START

Mike Collins & José Marzan Jr.

Cover by **Michael T. Collins** and **José Marzán Jr.**

FISH STORY

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ALL THOSE YEARS OF EATING *BLACKENED SWORDFISH.*

NOW IT'S *PAYBACK TIME.*

I *HATE* THIS.

MY NAME IS *THE FLASH*. YOU MAY BE WONDERING HOW I GOT *IN* THIS MESS. I KNOW *I* AM.

IT BEGAN WITH A *SEA CRUISE* FOR *TWO*... A LITTLE PERK OFFERED TO *LINDA* BY HER *SPONSORS* WHEN HER *TALK SHOW CONTRACT* CAME UP FOR RENEWAL...

EVEN THOUGH WE'RE NOT REALLY AN *ITEM*, SHE ASKED ME TO GO *WITH* HER.

IT *SEEMED* LIKE A GOOD IDEA AT THE *TIME*.

ARE YOU *SURE* THIS IS THE RIGHT GRIP? HOW'D *YOU* GET TO BE SUCH AN EXPERT IN TENNIS?

SS METROPOLIS SPIRIT

I'M A *QUICK STUDY*.

C'MON. LET'S *VOLLEY*. I'LL TEACH YOU *EVERYTHING* I KNOW.

LOMBARDI GYM

LET'S START WITH THE *BASIC RETURNS*.

THERE'S THE *LOB*...

...'SCUSE...

...THE *SMASH*...

...THE *BACKHAND*...

...AND THE *TOPSPIN*!

OOOH! AND THE CROWD GOES WILD!

PLEASE! NO MORE! YOU'RE EMBARRASSING ME!

THANKS, WALLY.

I LEARNED SO MUCH.

I'M A REGULAR STEFFI GRAF NOW.

ENJOYING YOURSELF, ARE YOU?

TRAPPED ABOARD THE S.S. SEPTUAGE-NARIAN? WHAT'S NOT TO ENJOY?

WATCHING PEOPLE TAKE THEIR DENTURES OUT AT THE DINNER TABLE?

I COULD DO THAT ALL DAY!

YOU'RE BEING A BUTTHEAD.

YEAH, BUT A WELL-MEANING BUTTHEAD. YOU KNOW ME. I HAVE THE ATTEN-TION SPAN OF A FRUIT FLY.

I CRAVE DANGER! RISK! PERIL!

SHUFFLEBOARD OFFERS VERY LITTLE OF THAT.

THE OPPORTUNITIES TO BASK IN SUPER-SPEED THRILLS ON A CRUISE LINER ARE LIMITED--

--TO SAY THE LEAST!

WHY CAN'T SOMETHING EXCITING HAPPEN BEFORE I DIE OF BOREDOM?

WHY CAN'T I EVER LEAVE WELL ENOUGH *ALONE*?

YOU WANT A *THRILL*, YOUNG FELLA? *HERE'S* ONE!

HE WAS *RIGHT*. OVER THE PORT SIDE, WE SAW A *SPERM WHALE* -- A BEAUTIFUL BEAST THAT, DESPITE ITS SIZE, IS ONE OF THE SEA'S MOST *PEACEFUL* AND *GENTLE CREATURES*.

OR SO I BELIEVED.

SS METROPOLIS SPIRIT

OH, WALLY! WHAT A *SIGHT*! WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF SPOTTING A *WHALE* LIKE THAT?

I'VE GOT A *BETTER* ONE FOR YOU.

WHAT ARE THE CHANCES OF SEEING *FOUR* OF THEM HEADED *RIGHT FOR US*?

HOW *WEIRD*! THEY'RE MOVING IN *PERFECT ORCHESTRATION*...

...AS IF THEY WERE BEING... I DON'T KNOW... *COMMANDED* SOMEHOW!

GET *OUT* OF HERE! WHO ORDERS *WHALES* AROUND?

I DIDN'T GET A CHANCE TO *ANSWER* HER.

AT THAT *MOMENT*, THE WHALES BEGAN CROWDING AROUND THE LINER -- USING THEIR TREMENDOUS POWER TO STEER IT TOWARDS AN *IGLAND* IN THE *DISTANCE*...

SS METROPOLIS SPIRIT

WHUMP!

...AND STRAIGHT INTO THE CORAL REEF THAT SURROUNDED IT.

WE WERE A SHIPWRECK WAITING TO HAPPEN.

THE KREIGSTIS

WE'RE ABOUT TO BE SEAFOOD! CAN'T WE TURN AROUND?

I DOUBT IT...

...BUT I'LL ASK! CAP'N...!

DON'T LOOK AT ME! WE'VE LOST CONTROL! I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE THIS!

HOLD TIGHT! WE'RE BREAKING UP!

SS METROPOLIS SPIRIT

KRRRSHH!

KRAK!

NNNGH!

...BUT NOT BEFORE CATCHING A GLIMPSE OF THE GUY RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS CATASTROPHE...

...AS I WAS ABOUT TO TELL LINDA, THE ONLY MAN I KNOW WHO'S FLUENT IN WHALESPEAK.

AQUAMANNN...

MY HEAD SOUNDED LIKE A BOWLING BALL HITTING THE PAVEMENT.

I STARTED TO BLACK OUT...

...NNNNN NYYYAHH!

NEVER DO I WANT TO WAKE UP LIKE THAT AGAIN.

WHILE I'D BEEN OUT, SOMEONE HAD TRUSSED ME UP AS A HOSTAGE.

LINDA WASN'T FARING ANY BETTER. ACROSS THE ISLAND, I COULD SEE HER WORKING ALONGSIDE SURVIVORS OF ALL OF THE STRANDED SHIPS.

THEY WERE EXCAVATING... CLEARING SOME SORT OF SUBTERRANEAN PASSAGE...

...UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE MARINE MARAUDER.

I RECOGNIZED HER FROM JLA CASEFILES. SHE, TOO, HAD THE POWER TO COMMAND SEALIFE.

SHE WAS ALSO REALLY, REALLY CRAZY.

WHAT'S HER STORY?

HER? SHE'S A PIRATE. SHE'S ALSO TWO SARDINES SHORT OF A CAN. SHE LOVES FISH--AND I MEAN SHE REALLY LOVES FISH.

WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE.

THIS WON'T TAKE LONG. MOVE FAST ENOUGH...

...AND I CAN RIP THIS HEMP APART WITH A FEW HUNDRED YEARS' WORTH OF STRESS!

LIKEWISE FOR THE ROPES THAT HOLD MY FEET...

...AND IT'S FLASH TO THE RESCUE!

HEAR THAT, LADY? CALL OFF YOUR PETS, OR...

OR WHAT? YOU'LL HURT ME? KNOCK ME OUT? WHAT?

TRUST ME. YOU DON'T WANT TO DO ANYTHING TO DISTRACT ME.

AFTER ALL... THE SHARKS ARE UNDER MY CONTROL!

IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO ME... WHY, THERE'S NO TELLING HOW WILD THEY'LL GET!

I SEE. AREN'T YOU CLEVER?

MMM-HMM. AND AREN'T YOU HELPLESS?

WALLY, THOSE POOR PEOPLE... CAN'T YOU GET THEM DOWN?

FROM WHERE SHE'S STUCK THEM? I DON'T SEE HOW. I MIGHT PULL ONE OF THEM FREE, MAYBE TWO... BUT NOT BEFORE THE OTHERS BECOME SHARK BAIT.

THEN GO FOR HELP! YOU CAN RUN ACROSS THE WATER, CAN'T YOU?

ONLY WHEN I CAN BUILD UP ENOUGH MOMENTUM.

LOOK AROUND. MAYBE I COULD REACH TOP SPEED ON THIS SHORT COASTLINE...

... AND MAYBE I COULD NEGOTIATE THAT SLIPPERY REEF...

BUT EVEN IF I SUCCEEDED... I'D HAVE NO IDEA WHICH WAY THE MAINLAND IS.

THERE IS SOMEBODY WHO CAN HELP US... BUT WHERE IS HE?

WHEREVER I WANT HIM TO BE. AQUAMAN, DEAR BOY, WORKS FOR ME NOW. AND HE'S SEARCHING FOR SOMETHING.

FAMILIAR WITH THE LOST CROWN OF ENLIL, ARE YOU?

WHERE'S AQUAMAN?

WHAT DO YOU THINK? WHAT IS IT, SOME GREAT ATLANTEAN TREASURE OR SOMETHING?

BABYLONIAN, ACTUALLY. I'VE BEEN SEARCHING FOR IT FOR YEARS. ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE NEVER HEARD OF IT? NO?

OKAY. ANYWAY, LEGEND HAS IT THAT ENLIL, A TERRIBLE STORM GOD, WAS SLAIN MILLENNIA AGO... BUT THAT HIS SACRED CROWN LIES SAFE IN A MAJESTIC PALACE BENEATH THE WAVES.

"IT TOOK YEARS OF RESEARCH AND CROSS-REFERENCE TO DISCOVER JUST WHERE. THE CROWN GIVES ITS WEARER COMPLETE DOMINION OVER THE SEVEN SEAS...

"... SO YOU CAN BET IT WAS HIDDEN PRETTY WELL."

"A MONTH AGO, I DISCOVERED EVIDENCE THAT THE PALACE LIES BENEATH THIS VERY ISLAND.

Enlil

"USING AN ANCIENT MAP, I FOLLOWED THE TRAIL TO THE PALACE THROUGH A SEALED CAVERN...

"... WHICH, IN TURN...

"... LED TO A SPECTACULAR UNDERWATER GROTTO."

"THE PALACE LAY *BEYOND* THE GROTTO. OBVIOUSLY, I WAS GOING TO NEED HELP *UNEARTHING* IT-- SO I STARTED A *RECRUITMENT DRIVE.*

"AND WHILE MY *CASTAWAYS* CLEARED THE CAVERN *ABOVE*--

"I CALLED OUT *REINFORCEMENTS* TO DIG THROUGH THE RUBBLE *BELOW.*

"I PUT OUT A CALL TO *ANY* AND *ALL* SEA CREATURES IN THE AREA, AND WHO DO YOU THINK *ANSWERED* IT...

"...BUT *AQUAMAN HIMSELF?* "

"HALF-*MAN*, HALF-*FISH*...AND *ALL MINE* TO CONTROL!

"WHOOOF!

"... HE PITCHED RIGHT IN TO *HELP.* "

"HE STARED AT ME WITH THOSE SOULFUL EYES AND THEN WITHOUT A *WORD*...

WAIT. YOU'RE SAYING YOUR POWER WORKS ON AQUAMAN, TOO?

ARE YOU SURE?

FACTS IS FACTS. AND HERE'S ANOTHER FACT: THE FLASH IS GOING TO HELP AQUAMAN FIND ENLIL'S CROWN.

YOU TAKE A LOT FOR GRANTED. OKAY, DEAL-- BUT ONLY IF YOU'LL FREE THESE PEOPLE AFTERWARDS.

DONE.

AND CAN I TRUST YOU?

WHAT CHOICE DO YOU HAVE?

POINT TAKEN. OKAY, I'LL NEED A WET SUIT...

HOW'S THIS? I GRABBED YOUR COSTUME WHEN WE BEACHED IN CASE YOU'D NEED IT.

IT'S INSULATED-- IT'LL DO.

YOU'LL BE NEEDING SOME SCUBA GEAR AS WELL. IT'S DEEP DOWN THERE.

THE CROWN'S INSIDE AN ORNATE CHEST. HURRY BACK WITH IT--BUT BE CAREFUL!

YEAH.

RIGHT.

AND SO BEGAN THE *TREASURE HUNT*. DID I *BELIEVE* IN THE POWER OF A *MAGIC BABYLONIAN CROWN*?

WHY *NOT*? I BELIEVE A MAN CAN *TALK TO FISH*.

BESIDES, *BELIEVING* WASN'T THE *POINT*.

THE MARAUDER MAY COME ACROSS ABOUT AS THREATENING AS A *VALLEY GIRL*...

...BUT HOSTAGES ARE *HOSTAGES*.

WHICH BRINGS ME TO WHERE I *STARTED* THIS STORY...

...STARING DOWN A *PHALANX OF ANGRY SWORDFISH*.

WAIT! THE *SWORDFISH* AREN'T AFTER *ME*.

AQUAMAN'S USING THEM TO DIG THROUGH THE *ROCK*.

I MAKE *FAST WORK* OF THE DEBRIS...

...AND UNEARTH SOMETHING *VERY INTERESTING* BEHIND IT.

THERE IT IS... A *DEAD END*.

CLEVER. STILL, I SIGNAL HIM TO LET *ME* TAKE OVER.

THAT IS, UNLESS AQUAMAN KNOWS HOW TO OPEN A *GIANT STONE DOOR*.

I SHOULDN'T HAVE *DOUBTED* HIM.

BEFORE EVEN *I* CAN REACT, THE CURRENT *SWEEPS US INSIDE.*

I'M NOT SURE WHAT I EXPECTED TO *SEE* ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THAT DOOR...

...BUT THIS WASN'T *IT.*

I'LL BE A *SON OF A GUN.*

SHE'S *NOT* CRAZY. THERE REALLY *IS* A *PALACE CHAMBER* UNDER THIS ISLAND.

AND UNLESS I'M *MISTAKEN,* THAT'S THE *CHEST* SHE'S...

UH OH.

THE TIDE!

IF IT SWEEPS THE CHEST AGAINST THE WALL, I'LL BE BRINGING IT BACK IN PIECES!

GOTTA GRAB IT BEFORE IT'S WASHED OFF!

FORTUNATELY, IT'S NOT FAR AWAY. JUST A HOP...

...A SKIP...

... AND A JUMP!

LOOKS LIKE MY PARTNER'S STILL A LITTLE LOOPY FROM BEING BRAINWASHED. MAYBE I CAN SNAP HIM OUT OF IT LATER...

...BUT I CAN'T WORRY ABOUT IT NOW. MY MAIN CONCERN IS STOPPING THE MARAUDER.

AQUAMAN'S THE LEAST OF MY PROBLEMS.

HOSTAGES OR NOT, IF THIS CROWN'S THE *REAL THING*, NO *WAY* CAN I LET HER *KEEP* IT.

AT HER COMMAND, AQUAMAN USES HIS *SUPER-STRENGTH* TO RIP THE CHEST APART. I WAIT UNTIL IT'S *OPEN*...

...AND THEN I MAKE MY *MOVE*.

MINE!

NO-- *MINE!*

WH--?

NO...

MINE.

AQUAMAN...?

NOT "AQUAMAN."

ENLIL.

CENTURIES AGO, MY FOES SOUGHT TO **BANISH** ME FROM MAN'S REALM BY *IMPRISONING* MY **SOUL** WITHIN THIS *THORNED CROWN!*

ABANDONING ME BENEATH THE **WAVES**, THEY CONDEMNED ME TO A **LIVING DEATH!**

SINCE THEN, I HAVE SOUGHT A HOST-FORM **WORTHY** AND **MIGHTY** ENOUGH TO **POSSESS!** AT LONG LAST, I HAVE *FOUND* ONE -- AND I AM *RENEWED!*

YOU FOUND...? B-BUT I BROUGHT AQUAMAN HERE!

HE--HE ANSWERED MY *CALL!*

NO.

HE ANSWERED *MY* CALL.

MY NAME IS *WALLY WEST.* I'M THE *FASTEST MAN ALIVE.*

FROM THE *NECK DOWN.*

STILL, I FELL FOR HER TALE *HOOK, LINE,* AND *SINKER.* WITHOUT *MY* HELP, THE CROWN WOULD STILL BE *BURIED.*

NICE WORK... BUTTHEAD.

NOW ENLIL *RECLAIMS* HIS DOMAIN! TODAY, THE OCEANS *RISE*... AND HUMANITY *FALLS!*

EARLIER, WHEN THE MARAUDER TALKED ABOUT HAVING AQUAMAN *WHAMMIED*, HER STORY *DID* SOUND AWFULLY... *FISHY.*

HE WAS *SERIOUS.* MOMENTS *BEFORE*, THE SEA WAS *CALM.*

NO MORE.

NOW I KNOW HOW *NOAH* FELT. OF COURSE, *NOAH* HAD AN *INSIDE TIP* AND *PLANNED AHEAD.*

WE'RE NOT THAT LUCKY. IN *MINUTES*, THE ISLAND WILL BE *FLOODED*--AND WE'VE GOT NO PLACE TO RUN.

NO PLACE...EXCEPT--

THE CAVE!

HURRY! GET EVERYBODY *INSIDE* AND AS FAR *DOWN* AS YOU CAN!

BUT--

THERE'S NO TIME TO *ARGUE*! JUST *GO*! DO YOUR PART--

--AND I'LL DO *MINE*!

I DON'T KNOW WHO ORIGINALLY IMPRISONED ENLIL, BUT IT'S EASY TO SEE WHY THEY DID IT.

BASED ON WHAT I CAN SEE, HE CAN COMMAND THE WHOLE OCEAN--

UNNNNFF!

--OR ANY PART OF IT.

WITH THAT KIND OF POWER... HE CAN RULE THE WORLD.

OH NO!

FLASH! HE'S HELPLESS!

WHAT CAN WE DO?

AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, ONLY TWO THINGS. YOU CAN GET TO THE SHELTER...

... AND YOU CAN PRAY.

IN DESPERATION, I START SWIMMING DOWN THE WATERSPOUT.

I'M MOVING AS FAST AS I CAN.

UNFORTUNATELY, SO IS THE WATERSPOUT.

MEANWHILE, ENLIL BEGINS TO CHANT.

I CAN'T HEAR HIM, OF COURSE.

I CAN'T HEAR ANYTHING BUT THE WIND AND THE RAIN.

WHICH MEANS, COME TO THINK OF IT--

--THAT SOMETHING'S FINALLY WORKING TO MY ADVANTAGE.

IF I CAN'T HEAR HIM...

...THEN HE CAN'T HEAR *ME*, EITHER. WHICH GIVES ME *ONE* CHANCE--

WHAM!

--TO SNEAK UP ON HIM!

SURPRISE!

KLUNK!

AQUAMAN! HELLO!

ANYBODY HOME?

WHAT... WHERE... ?

GOOD ENOUGH FOR *ME*. COME *ON*, WE'VE GOT TO...

HEY! ARE YOU *NUTS*? PUT THAT *DOWN*!

WE'VE GOT TO *MOVE*! GRAB *HOLD* OF MY *ARM*!

AND DROP THE *CROWN*? *FORGET* IT!

BLAST IT! AQUAMAN OR THE *MARAUDER*. I'VE GOT TO SAVE *ONE* OF THEM.

IT'S NOT MUCH OF A *CHOICE*.

THE CAVE'S MOUTH FACES *AWAY* FROM THE STORM. IF I BLOCK IT UP WITH ENOUGH *RUBBLE*, WE STAND A CHANCE OF ESCAPING THE WAVE'S *IMPACT*.

THIS *SHOULD WORK*...

...BUT *STILL*, FOR THE NEXT FEW *SECONDS*, WHATEVER *LUCK* THERE IS TO BE *HAD* IN THIS WORLD *BELONGS* TO *US*.

EVERYONE *ELSE* HAS TO *FEND* FOR *HIMSELF*.

MINE! *MINE!* THE POWER IS *MINE* AT *LAST!*

BY THE POWER VESTED IN *ME*-- I CROWN MYSELF *QUEEN* OF THE *SEVEN SEAS!*

DO YOU *HEAR* ME?

QUEEN OF THE SEVEN---

SLOOOOOOSSSH!

WITH ENLIL *GONE*, THE FLOODTIDE *SUBSIDED* WITHIN THE *HOUR*.

SS METROPOLIS SPIRIT

AQUAMAN -- *HIMSELF* AGAIN AT LAST -- BOARDED EVERYONE ON THE *CRUISE SHIP* AND PROMISED HIS *WHALES* WOULD ESCORT US TO *SAFE HARBOR*.

SO WE SAID OUR *GOODBYES*.

...SOME *AMAZING PALACE* WE FOUND. SHOULD WE FEEL *GUILTY* ABOUT KEEPING IT A *SECRET*?

AFTER WHAT *WE'VE* BEEN THROUGH? NOT REALLY, NO.

WELL... I SUPPOSE IT'S *POSSIBLE*.

MAYBE THE CROWN WAS EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN WE *THOUGHT*.

UNTIL THE *JUSTICE LEAGUE* CAN TAKE TIME TO EXPLORE IT *SAFELY*, IT'S BEST WE KEEP IT TO *OURSELVES*.

WALLY, WHAT ABOUT THE *MARAUDER*? COULD SHE HAVE *SURVIVED*?

MAYBE IN THOSE *LAST SECONDS*, SHE FOUND A WAY TO *HARNESS* ITS ENERGY.

"MAYBE SHE WAS ABLE TO *SHEATHE* HERSELF FROM THE *STORM*.

"MAYBE SHE'S *SAFE*... AND SHE'LL *RETURN* SOME DAY TO EXACT HER *REVENGE*.

"MAYBE...

"NAAAAH."

NEXT

GREG'S BACK, JOSÉ'S BACK... AND SO IS *ABRA KADABRA*!

THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE!

FLASH®

67
AUG 92

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

TM

ABRA KADABRA™ RETURNS!

HAT TRICK!

WAID

LaROCQUE

MARZAN

*Cover by **Greg LaRocque** and **José Marzán Jr.***

MY NAME IS THE FLASH. I'M THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE.

KEYSTONE CITY'S HELP

THAT SAID, EVEN I CAN'T BE EVERYWHERE AT ONCE.

WOULD THAT I COULD.

I COULD KEEP MORE PEOPLE OUT OF TROUBLE.

...DREADFUL INDIVIDUALS! WON'T WORK, DON'T WANT TO WORK... FOREVER SHOWING UP HAT IN HAND!

HAND...

NIGEL?

HAND..

hhhYAAAH!

LET'S GIVE A GREAT BIG HAND TO THE WORLD'S GRRRREATEST SHOWMAN...

KEYSTONE CITY'S HELP !!!!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... LET'S HEAR IT FOR KEYSTONE'S *ONE-MAN BASKETBALL TEAM...*

...THE *SCARLET SPEEDSTER*, WHO GIVES *NEW MEANING* TO THE TERM "*FAST BREAK*"!.

3A

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MISDIRECTION

MARK WAID – STORY
GREG LA ROCQUE – PENCILS
JOSE MARZAN JR. – INKS
TIM HARKINS – LETTERS
MATT HOLLINGSWORTH – COLORS
BRIAN AUGUSTYN – EDITOR
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I LOVE MY WORK. DID I MENTION THAT?

KICKING SUPER-VILLAIN BUTT ISN'T ALWAYS FUN, BUT THIS... THIS IS COOL.

THE CROWD'S GOING WILD. NICE WORK.

BACK TO YOU, PIPER. THIS IS SOME WHIZ-BANG YOU'VE PUT TOGETHER. CONGRATULATIONS.

YOU'RE ENJOYING YOURSELF ENTIRELY TOO MUCH, YOU KNOW.

I'M HELPING THE HOMELESS. I'M A GOOD SAMARITAN.

YOU'RE A HOT DOG.

Oh, THERE'S A NEWS FLASH.

PICK, PICK, PICK. WHO DOESN'T GET OFF ON A LITTLE APPLAUSE?

STILL, SPEAKING OF HOT DOGS, AS WE WERE... I'M IN DESPERATE NEED OF A RE-FUEL. C'MON.

EAT 'EM UP, LINDA! IT'S ON ME!

HUNGRY, ARE YA?

I COULD EAT A HORSE.

THEN YOU COME TO THE RIGHT PLACE.

EEEW. HOW CAN YOU PUT THOSE IN YOUR MOUTH?

WHY, LINDA -- THEY'RE WEENIE-LICIOUS!

YOU GONNA FINISH THAT?

BE MY GUEST.

PIPER REALLY CARES ABOUT THE HOMELESS, DOESN'T HE?

HE'S GOT FRIENDS FROM ALL WALKS OF LIFE. HE'S A GREAT GUY... AND HE'S DONE A TERRIFIC JOB OF PULLING THIS EVENT TOGETHER.

ME, I'VE GOT ONLY ONE COMPLAINT ABOUT THE ENTERTAINMENT HE CHOSE. SPEAKING OF WHICH...

WELL! IF IT'S NOT THE VIZIER OF VELOCITY HIMSELF! CAUGHT YOUR ACT. IT WAS... CUTE.

DID I ASK YOU? GET LOST, OKAY?

JEALOUS?

OF YOU? NOT HARDLY. ADOPTING THE STAGE NAME OF A SUPER-VILLAIN IS LIKE POKING AT A HYDROGEN BALLOON WITH A MATCH.

ABRA KADABRA WAS REAL, YOU KNOW. AND HE WAS BAD, BAD NEWS.

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YAWN.

HE ALSO HAD AN *EGO* LIKE A *BOTTOMLESS PIT.* IF HE CAUGHT YOU TRADING OFF *HIS* FAME, HE'D BE *AMAZINGLY* UNHAPPY. I'D SWEAT.

I SEE. AND WHERE *WAS* THIS *SUPREMELY POWERFUL MAGICIAN* THE LAST TIME YOU SAW HIM ?

HE...WAS... HIT BY A TRUCK.

OOOH. HOW *THREATENING!* I HAVE *CHILLS.!*

FINE. *BE* THAT WAY. IT'S *YOUR FUNERAL,* YOU JERK.

THE *REAL* ABRA KADABRA WAS... WHAT ? A *SORCERER ?*

MORE OF A *TECHNO-WIZARD,* ACTUALLY. A *TIME-TRAVELER* FROM THE *64TH CENTURY* WHO CRAVED *ATTENTION* AND *APPLAUSE.*

WHENEVER HE COMMITTED CRIMES, HE USED *FUTURE SCIENCE* THAT WAS SO FAR ADVANCED, IT LOOKED LIKE--

--*MAGIC,* PEOPLE OF KEYSTONE ! A WONDROUS SPECTACLE OF PULSE-POUNDING PRESTIDIGITATION THAT WILL LEAVE YOU *SPELLBOUND!*

PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE AWE AND MYSTERY OF.. *ABRA KADABRA'S DISAPPEARING DECK !*

SURROUNDED ON ALL SIDES BY PRYING EYES! NO HOPE OF ESCAPE FROM THE HOUSE OF CARDS! AND YET...

AND YET...

RELUCTANT AS I AM TO ADMIT IT, THIS IS A COOL TRICK. I'VE SEEN IT BEFORE, AND I'VE NO IDEA HOW IT WORKS.

ANY SECOND THE CARDS WILL FALL AWAY, AND HE'LL HAVE VANISHED. AT LEAST...

...THAT'S THE WAY IT HAD GONE IN REHEARSAL.

EEEEYAAAGGHH!

WHERE DID THE FIREBALL COME FROM?

IT CAUGHT ME FLAT-FOOTED.

I TRY TO EXTINGUISH IT WITH A VACUUM BEFORE KADABRA IS TOAST, BUT THE FLAMES REFUSE TO COOPERATE.

THE FASTER I RUN, THE HOTTER THEY BECOME. AND THAT'S IMPOSS...

NO.

NOT IMPOSSIBLE.

MAGIC.

BLAST IT! I TOLD HIM! I WARNED THIS GUY ABOUT PLAYING WITH FIRE...

...BUT HE WOULDN'T LISTEN.

SUDDENLY, THE AIR THUNDERS WITH APPLAUSE.

OF COURSE. THE CROWD THINKS THIS IS ALL PART OF THE SHOW.

THANK GOD FOR SMALL FAVORS. THE ARENA IS FULL. IF THERE'S A PANIC, PEOPLE WILL TRAMPLE ONE ANOTHER TRYING TO GET OUT.

PIPER SAYS HE'LL FIDDLE WITH THE P.A. SYSTEM--TAP INTO HIS KNOWL-EDGE OF SOUND AND GENERATE SOME SOOTHING SUBSONICS TO KEEP EVERYONE CALM.

TO KEEP EVERYONE APPLAUDING. WHICH SENDS A CHILL UP MY SPINE A I REALIZE...

... THAT'S HIS CUE.

THANK YOU! THANK YOU ALL!

ABRA KADABRA IS HERE.

IT'S SHOWTIME.

NOW, A LOT OF UNCLE BARRY'S OLD ENEMIES ARE DOOFUSES. YOU'D THINK A GUY NAMED "ABRA KADABRA" WOULD MAKE THE TOP OF THAT LIST.

YOU'D BE WRONG. KADABRA'S DANGEROUS NOT JUST BECAUSE HE'S POWERFUL, BUT BECAUSE HE DANCES ON THE EDGE OF INSANITY.

AND BECAUSE EVERYTHING GETS A LITTLE WEIRD WHEN HE'S AROUND.

POP!

YAAH!

YOU'LL LIKE THIS. YOU HAVEN'T SEEN THIS ONE.

NOTHING UP MY SLEEVE...

PRESTO!

NOTICE THAT AT NO TIME DO THE *FINGERS* LEAVE THE *HAND!*

I DIDN'T SEE THIS IN THE *PROGRAM!* GEORGE, WHO *IS* THAT?

WHO *KNOWS* FROM MAGICIANS? WHAZZIZ-NAME... *HOUDINI?*

HOUDINI?

VAM!

HOW *DARE* YOU?

HOUDINI WAS A *CHARLATAN!* A *CHEAT!* A *BASE FRAUD!*

HOUDINI SWORE TO PERFORM THE *ULTIMATE* MAGICAL FEAT! HE VOWED TO *RETURN* FROM THE *DEAD!*

DEAR LADIES AND GENTLEMEN... HOUDINI *FAILED...*

...WHERE *ABRA KADABRA* HAS *SUCCEEDED!*

Oh GOD.

GUESS WHO'S FINALLY DANCED OVER THE EDGE.

THE CROWD'S GETTING ANTSY. GOTTA PLAY INTO THAT EGO. KEEP HIM TALKING...UNTIL I FIND A WAY TO SHUT HIM UP.

WHAT ARE... >GASP<... ARE YOU YAMMERING ABOUT?

WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU, ANYWAY? YOU... >GKKK<... YOU LOOK LIKE DEATH WARMED OVER.

I'M NOT SURPRISED. AFTER ALL, IT WAS DURING OUR LAST BATTLE...

...THAT YOU KILLED ME.

"SLAIN IN AN EXPLOSION OF HELLFIRE, I AWOKE TO FIND MYSELF IN THE WORLD OF THE DAMNED.

"FLESH AND BLOOD HAD BECOME FORMLESS WRAITH. ABRA KADABRA WAS BUT A MEMORY-- A GHOST, TRAPPED IN THE REALM OF THE AFTERLIFE."

"A SPECTRE FREE OF CORPOREAL CONSTRAINTS, YET STILL SUBJECT TO EXQUISITE AGONY. THE BURNING PAIN OF DAMNATION WAS INDESCRIBABLE.

"IT WAS THE ONLY THING THAT KEPT ME SANE."

"OBVIOUSLY. GO ON...?"

"IN TIME, THE SUFFERING WAS REPLACED BY SOMETHING WORSE. THE DESPAIR OF SOLITUDE... THE CHEERLESS SILENCE OF A WORLD THAT TOOK NO NOTICE OF ME.

"ONLY THEN DID I FIND THE POWER TO FREE MYSELF FROM HELL."

REVEL IN THE GLORY! REWARD ME WITH YOUR ACCOLADES! I STAND BEFORE YOU ABRA KADABRA THE ULTIMATE ESCAPE ARTIST...

...FOR GOD HIMSELF CANNOT HOLD ME!

SO YOU GENUINELY BELIEVE YOU'VE RISEN FROM THE GRAVE. ALL RIGHT. COULD BE.

ON THE OTHER HAND, IT COULD BE THAT THE EXPLOSION JAMMED THAT TELE-PORTATION CIRCUITRY YOU'VE GOT MOUNTED ON YOUR SKIN...

...AND THREW YOU TEMPORARILY OUT OF PHASE WITH THE REAL WORLD...

...UNTIL SUCH TIME AS ALL THAT TECHNOSTUFF REPAIRED ITSELF.

EVER THINK OF THAT?

NO! NO! DON'T LISTEN TO HIM! I CHEATED DEATH ITSELF!

I DON'T BUY IT. THE IRONY WOULD BE TOO SWEET.

THINK ABOUT IT. YOUR BEST TRICK EVER...AND YOU, OF ALL PEOPLE, HAD NO AUDIENCE.

THEN I'D SAY THAT CALLS FOR AN ENCORE!

YES! TODAY, EVERYONE DIES! EVERYONE! THEY'LL ALL GO TOGETHER...AND ABRA KADABRA WILL BRING THEM BACK FROM THE DEAD!

13

IT WILL BE THE *PERFORMANCE...* OF A *LIFETIME.!*

GOOD LORD. HE'S SERIOUS.

HE'S FORMED A SUICIDE PACT WITH THE WHOLE ARENA.

AND I DON'T THINK I CAN BREAK IT.

THIS GUY CAN MAKE ANYTHING HAPPEN. ANYTHING. I CAN FIGHT HIM... BUT I CAN'T STOP HIM. I'M OUT OF MY LEAGUE.

WITH A WAVE OF HIS HAND, HE'LL KILL EVERYONE HERE...

...UNLESS I KILL HIM FIRST.

I'VE GOT ABOUT ONE-TENTH OF A SECOND TO DECIDE IF I HAVE IT IN ME TO ACTUALLY TAKE A LIFE.

BUT IN THAT ONE-TENTH OF A SECOND, SOMETHING VERY INTERESTING HAPPENS.

I DON'T KNOW WHO SHE IS OR WHERE SHE COMES FROM... BUT IT LOOKS LIKE SHE'S ABOUT TO TAKE THIS DECISION OUT OF MY HANDS.

14

KADABRA RECOGNIZES HER. HE'S PARALYZED WITH FEAR. ALL I HAVE TO DO IS STAND HERE AND WATCH HIM FRY.

JUST STAND HERE.

FOR ONE-TENTH OF A SECOND.

JUST.

AHHH... FORGET IT.

I HATE MY WORK. DID I MENTION THAT?

THANK YOU FOR THE SAVE.

SEE YOU IN HELL.

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

15

EVIDENTLY, OUR RECORDS ARE *CORRECT*. IN THIS TIME PERIOD, THE INMATES *DO* RUN THE ASYLUM.

IN *THIS*...? WHERE ARE YOU FROM?

FROM *HIS* TIME. FROM THE 64TH *CENTURY*.

SWELL. AND WHAT'S YOUR NAME? *ALA KAZAM*?

NAME? I HAVE NOT YET *EARNED* A NAME. I AM A *PEREGRINE*... A *HUNTER*.

AND YOU TRIED TO KILL *KADABRA*.

NO. I TRIED TO *RETRIEVE* HIM BY OPENING A *TIMEPORT*. I HAVE BEEN *DISPATCHED* ON A MISSION OF *UTMOST URGENCY* TO *RETURN* HIM TO HIS PROPER *ERA*.

I HAD NOT PLANNED ON *RELYING* UPON *TRACKING INSTRUMENTS*. HE WAS *MINE*-- UNTIL *YOU* INTERFERED!

INTERFERED? *INTERFERED*? I--

AAAARRGGH.

YOU WANT TO *FIND* HIM? LET'S *FIND* HIM.

16

DON'T GET ME WRONG. I WANT YOU TO TAKE HIM BACK. BUT IF THIS IS SO URGENT, WHY'D YOU LET HIM RUN AMOK IN OUR TIME FOR TEN YEARS?

IF YOU'RE A TIME TRAVELER, WHY DIDN'T YOU JUST SNATCH HIM FROM FIVE MINUTES AFTER HE FIRST SHOWED UP?

CHRONAL DISPLACEMENT OVER SO MANY CENTURIES IS NEVER THAT PRECISE. ONLY THE ENERGY SURGE THAT FUELED HIS RE-ENTRY INTO THIS REALM ALLOWED ME TO PINPOINT HIM AT ALL.

AT BEST, WE COULD TARGET A DECADE CLOSE TO THE ONE INTO WHICH WE ORIGINALLY BANISHED HIM.

WHAT? ARE YOU TELLING ME YOU SENT HIM HERE? ON PURPOSE? ARE YOU INSANE?

NO... BUT HE IS. THE BEING YOU CALL ABRA KADABRA WAS AN ABERRANT PERSONALITY-- AN ENTITY WHO DENIED THE GROUPMIND AND SOUGHT INDIVIDUALITY.

FOR THIS CRIME, HE WAS EXILED THROUGH TIME. SENDING HIM HERE SEEMED THE HUMANE THING TO DO.

ON THE BALL COMICS

I'M TONGUE-TIED. I CAN'T TELL HER OFF FAST ENOUGH.

DON'T TALK TO ME ABOUT HUMANE! IS IT HUMANE TO DUMP A SUPER-POWERED PSYCHOTIC ON AN UNSUSPECTING PEOPLE?

WHY NOT JUST DROP AN A-BOMB ON SOME CAVEMEN? OR HAVE YOU DONE THAT TOO?

ACCORDING TO OUR RECORDS, THE LATE 20th CENTURY WAS A RENAISSANCE OF RECKLESS BEHAVIOR.

WE ASSUMED HE'D BE WELL CARED FOR BY HIS OWN KIND.

17

GO SOUTH.

MORE CHEERY NEWS. MY GENERATION GOES DOWN IN HISTORY AS A CONFEDERACY OF LUNATICS, SAYS MISS HOLIER-THAN-THOU.

I FIGHT THE URGE TO RUN HER UP THE SIDE OF A BUILDING AND LET GO.

EAST.

NOT ONLY DON'T I HAVE TIME TO ADJUST HER ATTITUDE... SHE REALLY DOES HAVE THE UPPER HAND.

UP.

I'LL PUT UP WITH ANYTHING TO GET RID OF KADABRA.

NORTH. YOU MEAN NORTH.

IF I HAD MEANT NORTH...

18

HE WANTS TO DESTROY THE *ENTIRE CITY!*

STAND BACK. THIS SHOULD TAKE CARE OF HIM.'

... I WOULD HAVE *SAID* NORTH.

I *UNDERESTIMATED* HIM. HE'S NOT OUT TO KILL AN *ARENA* FULL OF PEOPLE...

Oh, PLEASE.

KA-THOOM!

KA-RACK!

THAT'S THE BEST YOU CAN *DO*? FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE, *NAIL* HIM ALREADY.' IF HE FINISHES HIS *INCANTATIONS*, HE'LL SWEEP KEYSTONE *CLEAN*.'

19

AND HE'LL EXHAUST HIS POWER! GOOD POINT!

HEY! DON'T STOP NOW! I'M COUNTING ON YOU!

BUT I'M WASTING MY TIME. LOOK AT HIS ENERGY READOUT. IT'S STAGGERING!

WHAT?

HE'LL BE MUCH EASIER TO CAPTURE ONCE HE DRAINS HIMSELF WITH HIS LITTLE TANTRUM.

YOU CAN'T BE SERIOUS! WHAT ABOUT THE PEOPLE?

THEY'RE HISTORY.

NOT IF I CAN HELP IT!

ZO

GUESS IT'S TRUE. YOU WANT SOMETHING DONE RIGHT...

WHAM!!

...YOU'VE GOT TO DO IT YOURSELF!

NICE SENTIMENT.

IT'LL LOOK GOOD ON A TOMBSTONE.

I HIT HIM TOO HARD TO KEEP MY BALANCE. NOW WE'RE IN FREE FALL.

WE'LL NEVER SURVIVE THE IMPACT, UNLESS...

...PEREGRINE ARRANGES FOR US TO FALL SOMEWHERE SAFE.

AT FIRST, I THINK SHE'S COME THROUGH. BUT THEN I REALIZE...

unnnngh!

THUD!

21

...THIS ISN'T QUITE WHAT I HAD IN MIND...

OH BOY.

next • THE FUTURE ISN'T WHAT IT USED TO BE!!

THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE!

FLASH®

FUTURE TENSE!

68
SEP 92

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TM

WAID

LAROCQUE

MARZAN

19 LAROCQUE · MARZAN JR. 92

Cover by **Greg LaRocque** and **José Marzán Jr.**

ECLIPSO™ THE DARKNESS WITHIN

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WAID • BOLDMAN
CHAREST • DAVIS
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TRAVIS CHAREST
DAN DAVIS

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MY NAME IS THE FLASH. I'M THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE.
TEN SECONDS AGO, I CAUGHT A RIDE WITH ABRA KADABRA INTO THE 64TH CENTURY.
WITH ALL THE TRAVELLING I DO...
...YOU'D THINK I'D KNOW BETTER THAN TO HITCHHIKE.
BEAT THE CLOCK
MARK WAID - STORY
GREG LAROCQUE - PENCILS
JOSE MARZAN JR. - INKS
TIM HARKINS - LETTERER
MATT HOLLINGSWORTH - COLORIST
BRIAN AUGUSTYN, EDITOR - RUBEN DIAZ, ASSISTANT EDITOR

KADABRA? HE'S THE GUY WITH THE MUSTACHE, THE GOATEE, AND NO SKIN.

HE'S FROM THIS ERA. EXILED TO MY TIME, HE COMMITTED VICIOUS CRIMES USING FUTURE SCIENCE SO ADVANCED, IT LOOKED LIKE SORCERY. HE'S BEEN BOTHERING ME FOR YEARS.

NOW-- RELATIVELY SPEAKING-- WHOEVER BANISHED HIM INTO THE PAST SENT THIS PEREGRINE WOMAN TO RETRIEVE HIM.*

SMALL PROBLEM.

I ACCIDENTALLY CAME ALONG FOR THE TRIP.

*LAST ISSUE AND 4,000, OR SO, YEARS AGO-BHian

NO SOONER DID WE ARRIVE THAN I FOUND MYSELF UNDER ATTACK BY A BUNCH OF CAPERING LUNATICS WHO I TAKE TO BE THE BAD GUYS.

I CAN DODGE THEIR FIRE, BUT IF I EVER WANT PEREGRINE TO SEND ME HOME--

--I'D BETTER MAKE SURE SHE CAN, TOO.

HEADS UP.

BLAM!

RANDOM *VIOLENCE!* UNCONTROLLED *CHAOS!* I SEE THE FUTURE ISN'T WHAT IT *USED* TO BE!

HOW MY FOLLOWING HAS *GROWN!* THE *OPPRESSED* PEOPLE OF THIS *CLOCKWORK* CITY RESIST THE *CHRONARCH* MORE FIERCELY THAN *EVER!*

TRUE, CITIZEN ABRA. BUT THEY WILL FIGHT *WITHOUT* YOUR AID.

ENGAGE *STASIS* AURA.

AND JUST LIKE *THAT*, ABRA'S IN *CUSTODY*... AS ARE THE REMAINING *SKY-SLEDDERS.*

WHEW.

WHO WERE *THOSE* GUYS? ABRA REFERRED TO THEM AS "*FOLLOWERS*"?

CRIMINALS. *PSYCHOPATHS.* AGENTS OF *CHAOS* IN A WORLD OF *ORDER.*

YOU PREVENTED THEM FROM INFILTRATING THE *CENTRAL CLOCKWORKS.* FOR *THAT,* YOU HAVE OUR *THANKS.*

I SAVED A *BIG CLOCK.* *WHOOP DE DOO.* IF YOU REALLY WANT TO *THANK* ME, SEND ME *HOME.*

UNLESS YOU'RE PLANNING ON SENDING *THOSE* GUYS *WITH* ME. I GUESS *THEY* GET THROWN INTO THE PAST, TOO?

3

HARDLY.

NO!

KZZZZZT!

YOUR CHRONAL COORDINATES ARE ON REGISTER. YOU WILL BE RETURNED TO YOUR PROPER TIME. FIRST, HOWEVER, CITIZEN ABRA MUST BE ATTENDED TO. HIS PURPOSE MUST BE SERVED.

PURPOSE? WHAT PURPOSE? YOU'RE THE ONES WHO EXILED HIM IN THE FIRST PLACE. WHAT DO YOU WANT WITH HIM NOW?

WE WANT NOTHING. "WANTING" INVOLVES INDIVIDUAL DECISION-MAKING. WE FOLLOW THE WILL OF THE CHRONARCH.

STOP IT! STOP BEING SO CRYPTIC!

YOU OWE ME SOME ANSWERS! WHERE IS THIS "CHRONARCH" YOU KEEP TALKING ABOUT? WHO IS HE?

HE IS HERE.

HE IS ME.

YOU ARE THE FLASH. I RECOGNIZE YOU FROM OUR HISTORICAL RECORDS.

AND YOU? YOU'RE THE RULER OF THIS PLACE?

I AM... AN ADMINISTRATOR. THE PEOPLE OF THIS CITY LOOK TO ME TO MAINTAIN STRICT ORDER.

WITHOUT MY GUIDANCE, THEY WOULD BECOME VICTIMS OF ANARCHY--PREY TO THE CACOPHONOUS DISCORD OF INDIVIDUALITY.

INDIVIDUALITY. YOU SPIT THAT WORD OUT AS IF IT WERE A CURSE.

IT IS THE ANTITHESIS OF ORDER. LOOK BEFORE YOU! MARVEL AT THE WONDROUS HARMONY --THE FLAWLESS PRECISION WITH WHICH OUR CITIZENS GO ABOUT THEIR DAILY ROUTINE!

THEY MOVE LIKE MACHINES.

THANK YOU.

THAT WASN'T A *COMPLIMENT.* THIS IS *HORRIFYING.* YOU... *PROGRAM* THEM?

NOT I. ALL *PERSONAL PROGRAMMING* IS COORDINATED BY THE *CENTRAL CLOCKWORKS*--THE *MASTER TIMEPIECE* THAT IS THE VERY *HEART* OF THIS CITY.

THE *CLOCKWORKS* DICTATES THE *SPEED* AND *TIMING* OF EACH CITIZEN'S VARIOUS *ACTIVITIES.*

IT DETERMINES WHEN EACH MEMBER OF OUR SOCIETY *WORKS, RESTS,* AND TAKES *NOURISHMENT.*

I MERELY *ENFORCE* ITS PROGRAMING.

THANKS TO THE *CLOCKWORKS,* EXISTENCE IS A FUNCTION OF *EFFICIENCY* COMPUTED TO THE *NANOSECOND*... A SPLENDOR FOR WHICH WE CAN *ALL* BE GRATEFUL.

CAN YOU *IMAGINE* A WORLD IN WHICH INDIVIDUAL ACTIONS ARE RULED BY *INDIVIDUAL CHOICE?*

SO PREACHED *CITIZEN ABRA*-- AN *ABERRANT PERSONALITY* WHO BRAZENLY *CHAMPIONED* THE CONCEPT OF *SINGULAR THOUGHT.*

WELL... FRANKLY, *YEAH.* CALL ME *CRAZY,* BUT I DON'T THINK *INDIVIDUALITY* IS *THAT OVERRATED.*

6

ABRA *OPENLY DEFIED* THE CONCEPT OF PROGRAMMING. JUDGED *INSANE*, HE WAS CAST INTO THE *TIMESTREAM*.

HOWEVER, HE HAS SINCE BECOME A *CAUSE CELEBRE* AMONG CERTAIN *FACTIONS* IN THIS CITY. MORE AND *MORE*, OTHERS ARE *EMULATING* ABRA'S SEDITIOUS NATURE.

AS A *RESULT*, *INSURRECTION* IS AT HAND -- A *TERRORIST REBELLION* THAT THREATENS THE *CENTRAL CLOCKWORKS ITSELF*.

ABRA'S *PRESENCE* CAN *STEM* THIS REBELLION.

AND HOW IS *THAT*? ARE YOU PLANNING ON HAVING ABRA WORK *FOR* YOU ?

AFTER A *FASHION*.

AGENT *PEREGRINE*, INDIVIDUAL PROGRAMMING HAS BEEN TEMPORARILY *INTERRUPTED*. ALL CITIZENS WILL REPORT *IMMEDIATELY* TO *CENTRAL SQUARE*.

ESCORT CITIZEN ABRA THERE -- AND *CARRY OUT* YOUR *COMMAND*.

YES, CHRONARCH.

AND OFF SHE *GOOSESTEPS* -- A *GOOD* LITTLE SOLDIER.

JUST WHAT THE HELL HAVE I GOTTEN MYSELF INTO?

I'VE ENTERED A WORLD WHERE *ABRA KADABRA* IS A *GOOD GUY*!

PUZZLED, I FOLLOW PEREGRINE. I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE WHAT PART ABRA PLAYS IN ALL THIS.

ATTENTION, CITIZENS! WE DRAW TO YOUR ATTENTION THIS DAY CITIZEN ABRA--CONDEMNED IN YEARS PAST FOR HIS SINGULAR VISION!

WHEN LAST WE PUNISHED HIM, WE DID SO IN A HUMANE MANNER!

THIS WAS A MISTAKE!

ABRA, UNDERSTANDABLY, IS MORE WORRIED THAN CURIOUS. HE STRUGGLES AGAINST HIS BONDS, BUT IT'S NO USE. THE ART OF ESCAPE WAS NEVER HIS SPECIALTY.

EXILED, CITIZEN ABRA BECAME A HERO SYMBOLIZING HIS OWN CAUSE!

OUR ACTIONS TURNED HIM INTO A MARTYR! NOW, BY EXECUTING HIM... WE WILL TURN HIM INTO AN EXAMPLE!

WHAT?

8

THAT'S ENOUGH! I'VE HAD IT!

YOU PEOPLE ARE ABSOLUTELY NUTS!

WHAM!

YOU... THROWBACK! WHO ARE YOU TO JUDGE US?

ME? I'M AN INDIVIDUAL... ONE APPALLED BY TYRANTS WHO CHAMPION MINDLESS SLAVERY OVER FREE WILL AND LIBERTY!

WE "TYRANTS" RULE THE CITY. WE CONTROL EVERYTHING. WHAT DO YOU PLAN TO DO ABOUT US?

I... I...

WELL, SHE'S GOT ME THERE. I HAVEN'T A CLUE. I'M NOT EVEN SURE I CAN SHUT HER DOWN.

BUT THEN... MAYBE I DON'T HAVE TO.

WHILE WE WEREN'T LOOKING, ABRA FREED HIMSELF AFTER ALL.

YOU KNOW... HE IS GOOD.

CONJURED HIMSELF A SNAZZY NEW OUTFIT, TOO!

9

THE CROWD REALIZES IT. THEY'RE GOING WILD.

WHICH GIVES ME AN IDEA.

WHAT NOW? DO YOU DARE ATTACK ME ONCE MORE?

AND WASTE YOUR TIME? ARE YOU KIDDING?

WHO AM I... TO KEEP SUCH A MAJESTIC PERFORMER AS YOURSELF FROM HIS ADORING PUBLIC?

10

THANK YOU! THANK YOU ALL!

--THE SPECTACULAR SORCERY--

--THE MAGNIFICENT MAGIC--OF ABRRRRA KADABRA!

I KNEW IT. I KNEW IT!

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN--FROM ACROSS THE CENTURIES, I PRESENT TO YOU... THE GREATEST AUDIENCE OF ALL TIME... THE SENSATIONAL SHOWMANSHIP--

HE NEVER COULD RESIST THE ROAR OF THE CROWD.

I'M COVERED. FOR THE NEXT FEW MINUTES, THE CHRONARCH'S WATCHDOGS WILL BE SO BUSY TRYING TO QUIET ABRA...

...THEY WON'T EVEN NOTICE ME.

HEY--ABRA KADABRA'S NOT THE ONLY ONE WHO KNOWS THE ART OF MISDIRECTION.

THE CHRONARCH CLAIMED THERE'S A MOVEMENT AFOOT TO DESTROY THE CENTRAL CLOCKWORKS.

SOUNDS TO ME LIKE A DECENT IDEA.

MAYBE I CAN HELP THAT ALONG. I...

WOW.

THIS... ISN'T WHAT I FIGURED IT TO BE. THIS IS BEYOND COMPREHENSION.

I'D HOPED TO GET INTO THE CLOCKWORKS AND TURN SOMETHING OFF, RIP SOMETHING APART.

FORGET IT. I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT I'M LOOKING AT.

WHAT WAS I EXPECTING TO SEE? GEARS AND MAINSPRINGS? I'M FOUR THOUSAND YEARS IN THE FUTURE!

APPARENTLY, ACTUAL MECHANISMS ARE OLD HAT. THIS IS A LIGHT SHOW.

12

FOR ALL THIS TECHWORK, THERE'S EXACTLY ONE MOVING PART-- A SERIES OF METAL DISCS THAT LOOK TO BE SOME SORT OF HIGH-TECH DRIVE BELT.

IT JUST MIGHT BE THE SYSTEM'S WEAK LINK-- BUT I HAVE NO IDEA HOW TO STOP IT OR EVEN SLOW IT DOWN.

MAYBE, THOUGH...

EASY...

EASY...

...JUST MAYBE... I CAN SPEED IT UP.

ANARCHY? YOU WANT ANARCHY?

I'LL GIVE YOU ANARCHY.

DO THE MATH. IF THIS BAD BOY IS TIMED TO REGULATE ALL HUMAN ACTIVITY, THEN BY JAMMING IT INTO OVERDRIVE...

...I CAN THROW THIS ENTIRE METROPOLIS INTO A TIZZY.

COOL.

A WHOLE CITY OF FLASHES.

14

EVERYTHING'S BEGINNING TO SHAKE. A POSITIVE SIGN.

I STEP INTO HIGH GEAR.

FUTURISTIC TECHNOLOGY OR NO, A MACHINE IS STILL A MACHINE. DRIVEN FAST ENOUGH, THE CENTRAL CLOCKWORKS WILL OVERHEAT... AND OVERLOAD.

I HOPE.

ONCE IT DOES, OF COURSE, EVERYONE'S PROGRAMMING WILL BE DESTROYED. PEOPLE WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR THEIR OWN ACTIONS.

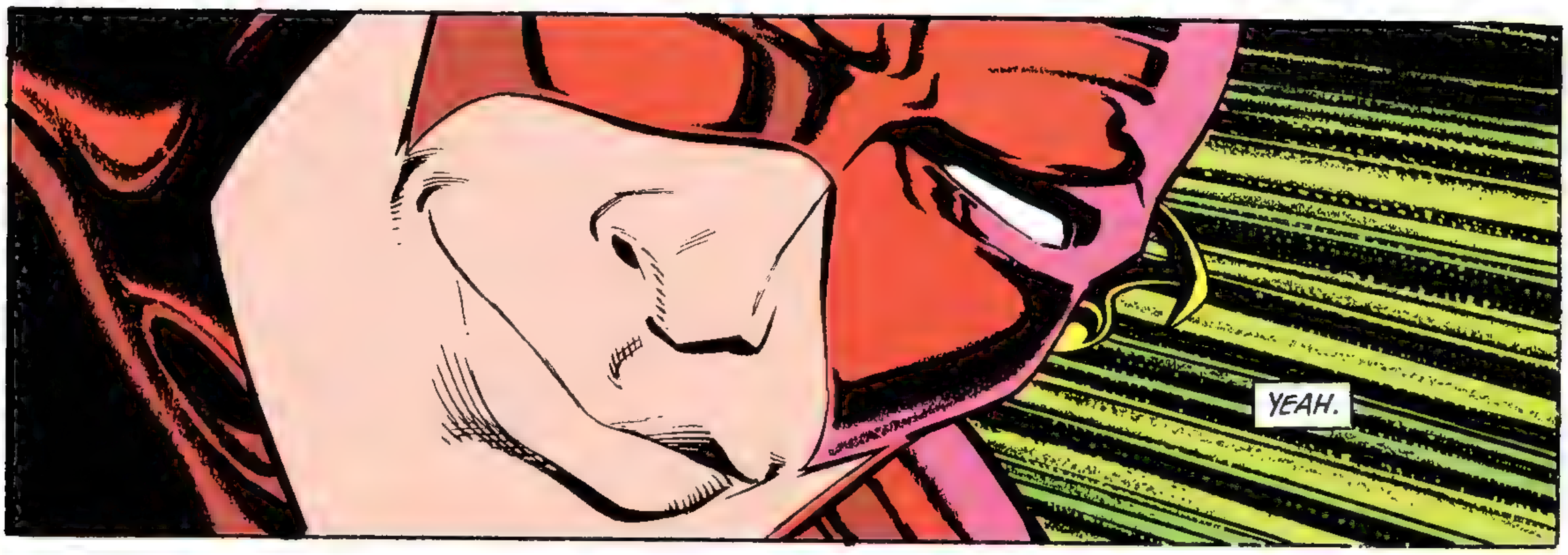
WHICH MEANS THE WHOLE CITY MIGHT BECOME A MADHOUSE... THANKS TO ME.

I'M NOT EVEN FROM HERE. DO I REALLY HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE THIS HAPPEN? TO SET MYSELF UP AS A ONE-MAN REVOLUTIONARY ARMY?

TO OVERTHROW THE GOVERNMENT AND THROW THIS ENTIRE SOCIETY INTO PANDEMONIUM?

DO I?

15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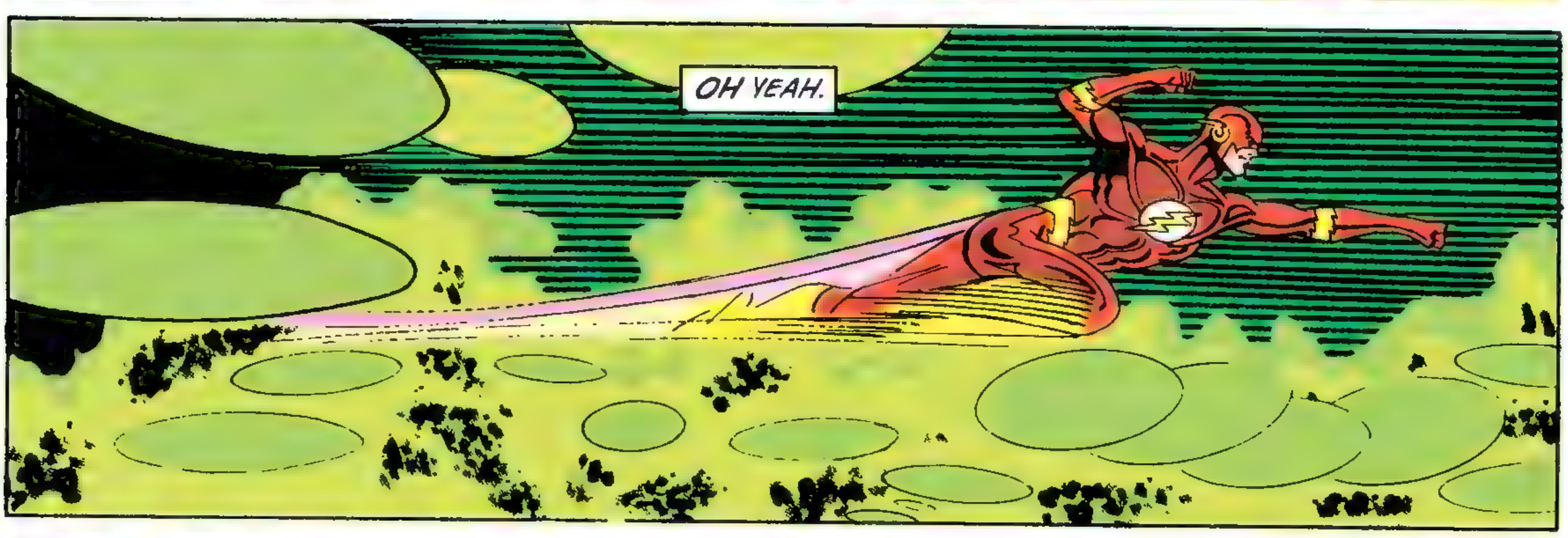
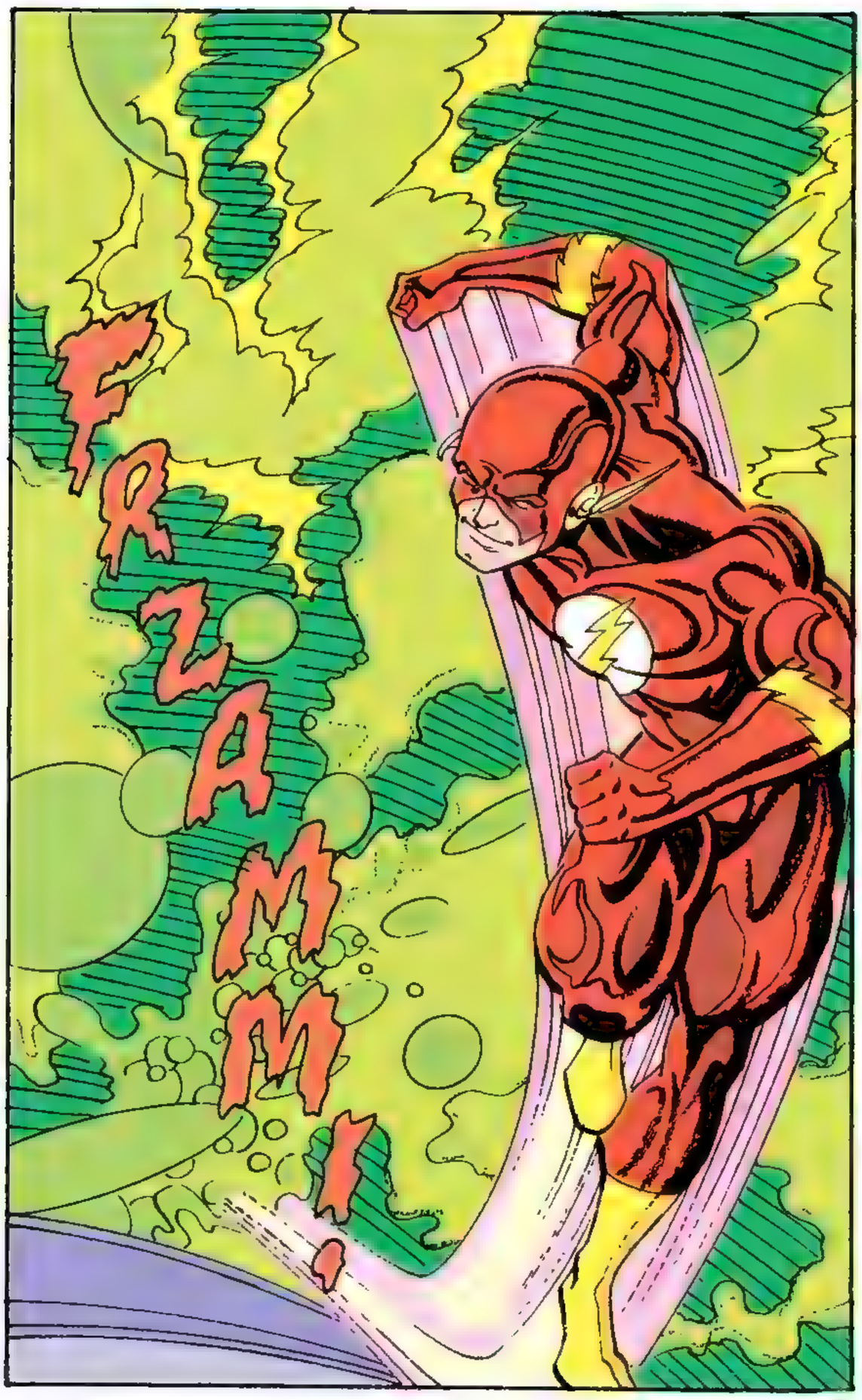

OH YEAH.


FR-ZA-M!

STRIKE DOWN THE CHRONARCH AND HIS WATCHDOGS! STRIKE FOR LIBERTY-- FOR FREEDOM!
HOLY COW.
THINGS GOT OUT OF HAND FASTER THAN I'D FIGURED. ABRA'S LEADING THE REBEL FORCES!
16

LOOK AT HIM. HE'S EATING THIS UP.

ABRA'S FINALLY GOTTEN WHAT HE'S ALWAYS DREAMED OF HAVING--AN AUDIENCE CAPTIVE TO HIS EVERY WORD AND DEED.

HIS FOLLOWERS--THOSE WHO'VE BEEN FIGHTING SO HARD FOR FREE WILL--WILL RULE THIS CITY BEFORE NIGHTFALL.

I CAN LIVE WITH THAT...BUT NOT WITH THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THEY'LL CROWN ABRA KING.

OR THAT I'LL SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE IN THE 64TH CENTURY.

FOR MY NEXT TRICK, I HAVE TO TIE UP THOSE LOOSE ENDS -- WHICH I CAN DO ONCE I CONVINCE PEREGRINE TO SEND ME HOME.

EASIER SAID THAN DONE. AFTER ALL, THESE PEOPLE DON'T EXACTLY OWE ME ANY FAVORS.

FORTUNATELY, I HAVE A PLAN. IT WON'T THRILL ABRA--BUT QUITE FRANKLY, I DON'T GIVE A RAT'S BUTT. START THE REVOLUTION WITHOUT HIM.

IT'S HOPELESS! ABRA'S FORCES HAVE OVERRUN THE CITY!

YOU'RE RIGHT! THERE'S ONLY ONE THING YOU CAN DO NOW TO GET RID OF HIM!

WHAT?

QUICK! SEND HIM BACK TO MY TIME! REGARDLESS OF WHO WINS THIS WAR--DO YOU REALLY WANT THE HEAD LUNATIC RUNNING THE NUTHOUSE?

CITIZEN ABRA? OF COURSE NOT!

17

COME WITH ME, CHILDREN! FOLLOW ME!

I AM UNCONQUERABLE! I AM INVINCIBLE! I AM ABRA--*

SHE FELL FOR IT.

WELL, I'LL BE DAMNED.

AND SO ENDS MY ADVENTURE IN THE FAR-FLUNG FUTURE.

EARLIER, PEREGRINE CLAIMED SHE COULD RETURN US TO THE SPECIFIC TIME AND PLACE SHE'D TAKEN US FROM.

SOMETHING ABOUT THAT BOTHERS ME. WHAT EXACTLY WERE WE DOING WHEN WE LEFT?

OH.

NOW I REMEMBER.

WE WERE FALLING TO OUR DEATHS.

18

NO WAY. FORGET ABOUT IT. I DIDN'T GUARANTEE THE FUTURE OF HUMANITY JUST TO END UP IN AN OBITUARY COLUMN.

FROM THE CORNER OF MY EYE, I SEE SALVATION IN THE FORM OF A GARBAGE SCOW.

I START KICKING LIKE THE DEVIL. WITH ANY LUCK AT ALL, I CAN TREAD ENOUGH AIR TO SLOW US DOWN AND GET US THERE...

...SAFELY.

I SEE THE TRIP WAS TOO MUCH FOR ABRA. HE'S UNCONSCIOUS. MORE GOOD NEWS.

...WHO'LL MAKE AN ORDINARY CONVICT.

WHOMP!

I TAKE THE OPPORTUNITY TO STRIP HIM OF HIS CIRCUITRY. WITHOUT ALL THIS TECHNOSTUFF, KADABRA IS POWERLESS. HE'S AN ORDINARY MAN...

19

I LEAVE KADABRA TO THE AUTHORITIES... THE 20TH CENTURY AUTHORITIES.

HE'S HELD IN MAXIMUM SECURITY PENDING A PSYCHIATRIC EVALUATION.

APPARENTLY, POUNCING ONTO A WITNESS STAND AND RANTING AT THE TOP OF HIS LUNGS ABOUT HOW I STOLE HIM AWAY FROM HIS MOMENT OF GREATEST GLORY WASN'T ENOUGH TO CONVINCE THE COURT HE'S CRAZY.

GO FIGURE.

IT'S PRETTY CREEPY, REALLY. THEY SAY HIS HATRED FOR ME BURNS HOTTER THAN THE HINGES ON THE GATES OF HELL.

MAKES SENSE. THINK ABOUT IT. FOR ONE BRIEF, SHINING MOMENT, HE HAD ALL HUMANITY SPELLBOUND.

BEFORE I BROUGHT THE CURTAIN DOWN.

THANKS TO ME, HE'S OUT OF TRICKS.

BOYS! I'VE GOT ONE FOR YOU! YOU'LL LOVE THIS ONE!

HIS SHOW IS OVER.

PICK A CARD! ANY CARD!

AND HE'S TRAPPED FOREVER IN A WORLD NOT HIS OWN.

PICK A CARD, I SAID!

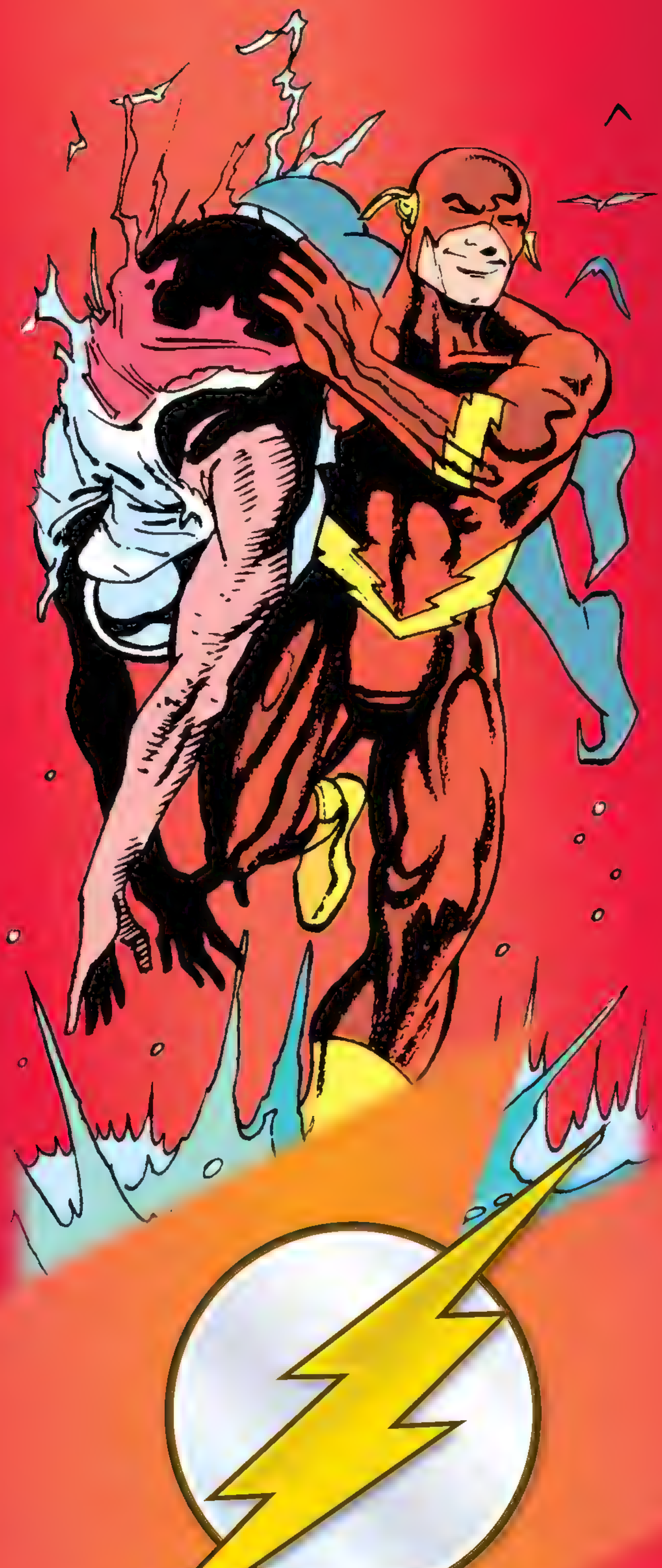
PLEASE!

GOD, PLEASE...

I ALMOST FEEL SORRY FOR HIM, BUT HEY...

...THAT'S SHOW BIZ.

End.



"IT WAS A BILLION-TO-ONE CHANCE THAT LIGHTNING AND CHEMICALS TURNED MY UNCLE BARRY INTO THE FASTEST MAN ALIVE-- THE FLASH!"

KRAKA-BOOM!

"THAT THE SAME THING WOULD HAPPEN TO ME, WAS A BILLION-TO-ONE CHANCE SQUARED!

"BEING IN THE RIGHT PLACE IN THE RIGHT TIME IS A HALLMARK OF THE SUPER-HERO BUSINESS."

"IT'S ALSO THE STORY OF MY LIFE."

RUN-IN!

STORY: MARK WAID + CRAIG BOLDMAN
PENCILS: TRAVIS CHAREST, INKS: DAN DAVIS
WITH SCOTT HANNA AND JOHN LOWE
LETTERS: TIM HARKINS, COLORS: MATT HOLLINGSWORTH
EDITS: BRIAN AUGUSTYN

"LET ME GIVE YOU A QUICK FOR INSTANCE..."

YOU ARE NOW LEAVING KEYSTONE / WELCOME TO CENTRAL CITY

30 ft.

"I USUALLY CAN'T KEEP MY BODY FUELED UP ENOUGH TO GET THROUGH THE DAY. OTHER TIMES, I HAVE NERVOUS ENERGY TO BURN. I'D BEEN JOGGING THE PAST FEW NIGHTS."

"YOU SHOULD UNDERSTAND, MY 'JOGS' COVER COUNTY MAPS..."

THEY SURE PUT BUILDINGS UP FAST.' I SWEAR THAT ONE WASN'T HERE YESTERDAY.

WOULD YOU KINDLY WIGGLE YOUR FANNY?

SALE!

Jesse Optical

RAY-BAN

ZOOOOMM!

WHAT'S YOUR HURRY, IF I MAY INQUIRE?

I HAVEN'T EATEN SINCE BREAKFAST. AND WHEN I DON'T EAT I GET HEADACHES.

C.C.B

NIGHT DEPOSIT AC

VERNON BROS.

I KNOW THE FEELING WELL. THEY CALL IT A 'HUNGER HEADACHE!'

EXACTAMUNDO. YOU GOT ANYTHING TO EAT ON YOU?

I GOT GUM.

CAN'T EAT GUM. I'M SEEING THE LOVELY LEONA TONIGHT AND I DON'T NEED A HEADACHE.

ROLLA-ROLLA-ROLL

?

I GOT NUTS.

DO NUTS HAVE A LOT OF CHOLESTEROL?

??? I COULD HAVE *SWORN* THAT BUILDING WASN'T THERE YESTERDAY!

BULLS

ZIP

HEY, THESE ARE IMPORTED. FRANCE. I THINK MY KIDS GAVE ME A CAN OF THESE ONE YEAR.

GOOD NUTS, HUH?

GET *ON* WITH IT, MAN.!

GIVE'EM 8½ ON THE NUT SCALE.

SOUNDS LIKE YOU'RE A NUT EXPERT.

WELL, THEY'RE IMPORTED, I KNOW THAT MUCH. I FOUND 'EM ON THE GROUND, YOU DON'T MIND, DO YOU?

NOPE.

3

GOT A CAN OPENER?

CAN OPENER NOTHIN! GOT MY ARMY KNIFE.

IF YOU'RE LOOKING FOR THE ECLIPSE, IT'S NOT FOR A COUPLE OF DAYS YET.

K500

MM?

AW, RASPBERRIES.

ONE QUESTION, TRICKSTER. HAVE YOU OR HAVE YOU NOT GONE STRAIGHT?

WELL... HOW STRAIGHT?

DAMN STRAIGHT, AND NARROW AS YOUR SQUINTY LITTLE EYES.

YOU'VE NEVER JAYWALKED, I SUPPOSE?

WE'RE TALKING ABOUT YOU.

FLOOSH!

FLOOSH!

JAYWALKING'S DANGEROUS! ESPECIALLY WHEN YOU CAN'T SEE!

OW!

4

STUPID, TRICKSTER! TAKING MY SIGHT AWAY MAKES ME MORE DANGEROUS, NOT LESS!

ONLY IF YOU HIT ME!

FLAIL! FLAIL!

FORTUNATELY, HIS FACE WAS IN THE RIGHT PLACE...

AND MY FISTS WERE THERE AT THE RIGHT TIME!

OW! YOU HIT ME!

KRAK!

THE REAL FLASH WOULDN'T HAVE USED FISTS. HE'D HAVE OUTSMARTED ME! DON'T YOU KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT PANACHE?

OH, I'M REAL, ALL RIGHT!

AND THE ONLY PANACHE YOU'RE GONNA GET FROM ME...

...IS A PANACHE IN THE NOSE!

4-KRAK!

R-RIPP!!

OW!

WANT MORE?

?

WHOOSH

!!!

LOOKS LIKE THE CHANGE IN CLIMATE DID YOU GOOD!

LOOKEE HERE, THE WEATHER WIZARD.

YOU WANT THANKS, I SUPPOSE.

ACCEPTED. HERE'S A MESSAGE FROM OUR LONG-LOST COMRADE, CAPTAIN COLD! HE'S CALLED A MEETING IN SECRET ROGUES GALLERY CODE.'

WONDER IF THE DOVER BOYS ARE STILL ON THE JOB?

THAT'S GOT 'ER--

POP!

YOU KNOW, THIS KIND OF NICKEL-AND-DIME STUFF IS REALLY BENEATH YOU...

HEY!

Oh NO!

POP!

SPRONG!

SPLASH!

THAT'S IT?? THAT'S PATHETIC.

FORGET THE MONEY. THAT CALIBER OF MATERIAL DOESN'T RATE A REWARD.

WAIT FOR IT:

*!!?#@ @!!?.!!

MY GIANT TRICKSTER JACK-IN-THE-BOX!!

SPRONKK!

WOAAHO-HOA!

NEXT TIME I WANT YOUR OPINION, WIZARD, I'LL BEAT IT OUT OF YOU.

oooh...

"DO YOU KNOW ABOUT MY FRIEND, CHESTER CHUNK? BRIGHT GUY. MOST PEOPLE WILL NEVER GET TO SEE A BLACK HOLE."

"HE MANAGED TO SWALLOW ONE. AND THAT WAS JUST AN APPETIZER!"

"CHANGES A GUY."

YOU LOOK LIKE... SOMETHING... THE...

CAT DRAGGED IN, I KNOW. IT MAKES ME MAD, CHUNK.

--SUCKER-PUNCHED BY CARNIVAL GEEKS LIKE TRICKSTER AND THE WEATHER WIZARD. I USED TO HANDLE THEM WHEN I WAS TWELVE! SOMETIMES I THINK I'M JUST NOT FOCUSED ENOUGH.

RIGHT HERE... WALLY--

SURE. HOLDING MICROCHIPS IN PLACE, THAT I CAN DO.

MY... FINGERS ARE... TOO...

TOO BIG FOR FINE WORK; NO PROBLEM. OF ALL MY MAD SCIENTIST PALS, YOU'RE THE ONLY ONE I'D ENCOURAGE. I'M GLAD TO SEE YOU GETTING BACK IN THE GAME.

FZAZT!

I HAD... A FEW IDEAS... ABOUT... SPACE WARPS...

...THAT YOU WANTED TO TEST OUT. GREAT.

ZZZT!

WE'RE... AL-MOST... RRR-R-R-R-R---

READY, RIGHT?

R-R-R-R-R---R---R----

READY. RIGHT. CHUNK?

"SOMETHING WAS SUDDENLY NOT RIGHT."

JUMPIN' GERONIMO'S JETS!!?

"A VERY STRANGE FEELING HIT ME AND MY SUPER-SPEED METABOLISM KICKED IN. IT DOES THAT BY INSTINCT. I THINK THEY CALL IT SELF-PRESERVATION."

CHUNK? MY GOD, WHAT HAPPENED?

"WHEN I STOOD STILL I FELT THIS TERRIBLE PULL; LIKE I WAS CAUGHT IN A TIDE. IT WASN'T SO BAD AS LONG AS I KEPT MOVING."

"MY FIRST REACTION WAS TO GET OUT. BUT WHERE WOULD THAT LEAVE CHUNK? I SUITED UP INSTEAD!"

"CHUNK WAS TAPPING INTO LARGELY UNKNOWN FORCES. IT WOULDN'T BE THE FIRST TIME A SCIENTIST HAD BEEN CAUGHT THAT WAY. HELL, IT WOULDN'T EVEN BE THE FIRST TIME FOR CHUNK."

"I FELT LIKE THROWING UP. GOOD, MAYBE I WAS JUST SICK AND THIS WASN'T REALLY HERE."

WEIRD.

CHUNK AND WALLY (PG-13)

CHUNK AND CONNIE (XXX)

?

!

CHUNK! CHUNK!

VHS

MEMORIES OF ME. TOO WEIRD!

HMMM. SOFT SQUISHY CARPET HERE.

YACK!

"THE FARTHER I WENT, THE STRONGER THE PULL BECAME."

MY GOD!

"I DIDN'T LIKE THIS ROOM."

"HALF MY BRAIN WAS TELLING ME TO CUT AND RUN."

"IT'S SCARY HOW SELDOM I LISTEN TO THAT HALF."

"I HAD TO FIND OUT WHERE THIS WAS LEADING."

R-RR-RRR-RRR-RRR

"I WAS FEELING SICKER. THE PULL WAS STRONGER. AND THIS THING--"

"IT HAD TO BE CHUNK'S SINGULARITY. THE WEIRD FORCE INSIDE HIM THAT MAKES HIM ABLE TO DISPOSE OF STUFF."

"WHAT'S THAT NOISE?"

"CHUNK'S NEW MACHINE. IT'S INSIDE HIS SINGULARITY-- THAT BLACK HOLE I MENTIONED--THAT CAN'T BE RIGHT. WARPS WITHIN WARPS?"

"BUT WHAT DO I DO ABOUT IT? I'M NO GENIUS."

R-RR-RRR

"THE NOISE--"

R-RR-RRR

CHUNK? IS THAT YOU?

"I THINK IT WAS HIS VOICE. TRYING TO TELL ME--BUT I WAS SO SPEEDED UP IT SOUNDED LIKE A LOW RUMBLE."

"I'VE BEEN INSIDE THE SINGULARITY BEFORE, BUT NOT LIKE THIS. IT FEELS DANGEROUS."

"IF I TURN OFF MY SPEED I CAN HEAR CHUNK TELL ME WHAT TO DO."

"AND I'LL ALSO BE AT THE MERCY OF THIS AWFUL FORCE."

12

HANG ON AND HERE WE GO!

R-R-RR

"SPEED OFF."

BA-ROOM!

RR--R-WALLY--WALLY!

CHUNK!

CAN YOU TOUCH...THE TELEPORTER?

MAYBE! I'LL TRY!

I'VE GOT IT!

SHUT... IT... DOWN!

HOW? IT LOOKS COMPLICATED!

THEN... PULL IT APART! DON'T TOUCH ANYTHING GREEN!

13

RED OR BLUE... IS OKAY!

RED OR BLUE; RED OR BLUE.

LIKE THIS ?

RIP! RIP! RIP! RIP!

YEAH.

FEEL LIKE I WAS PULLED... INSIDE-OUT.

AND OUTSIDE-IN AND BACK-AND-FORTH.

THE WARP EFFECT... ARCED... WITH MY OWN SINGULARITY.

YOU REALLY... TORE...

-- TORE IT UP, YEAH. WHO CARES ABOUT ALL THAT ? HOW ARE YOU ?

GLAD TO BE... ALIVE.

NO CHARGE, CHUNK. PART OF THE JOB.

NO. WALLY--

THE CHUNKSTER W. WEST/92

14

REMEMBER... HOW I WAS... WHEN YOU MET ME? PULLING... A ROBBERY. NO SELF-RESPECT.

I DIDN'T MUCH CARE... IF I LIVED... OR DIED THEN. YOU CHANGED THAT... FOR ME.

AND JUST NOW... I REALLY WANTED TO LIVE. I'M GLAD YOU... SAVED ME. THANKS.

AW... YOU'D DO IT FOR ME, CHUNK.

YEP.

"CHUNK'S MY PAL."

PROSPER

FOUR DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS FOR POPCORN AND LOLLY WATER! AND THEY GOT THE NERVE TO CALL ME A THIEF!

NEXT WEEK NEIL DIAMOND IN THE JAZZSINGER

PRICES -

SUPER SMALL - 1.00
SMALL SMALL - 1.50
A LITTLE BIGGER - 2.00
MEDIUM - 2.50
BIG MEDIUM - 2.75
LARGE - 3.00
LARGER - 3.50
REALLY LARGE - 4.50
WAY TOO M - 5.00
DEADLY - 10.50
...E - 1.00]

POPCOR

TRAVIS

4.50

--'COURSE, THEY MAY HAVE A POINT! HERE, MATE! MORE WHERE THIS CAME FROM, I SUPPOSE!

15

WELL, HERE BLOWS AN ILL WIND!

CAPTAIN BOOMERANG ALWAYS COMES BACK, YOU KNOW THAT!

WHAT'S THIS ON THE PICTURE SCREEN? STREWTH! THAT'S REVOLTING!

IT'S SYMBOLIC!

WHAT'S SYMBOLIC ABOUT A TYKE PIDDLING IN THE POOL?

IT'S SHAKESPEARE. "THE TEMPEST." YOU'VE HEARD OF SHAKESPEARE?

SURE, THE KLINGON AUTHOR.

GOLDEN GLIDER!

PROSPERO, DUKE OF MILAN, IS EXILED TO AN ISLAND FOR THIRTEEN YEARS. BUT HE HAS MAGIC POWERS.

HE CREATES A STORM THAT BRINGS ALL HIS ENEMIES TO THE ISLAND--FOR A FINAL RECKONING.

SURE, RIGHT, BUT WHY'S THAT ONE WEARING A BIRDHOUSE ON HIS HEAD?

THE STORM'S A NICE TOUCH.

EXIT

YOU'VE GOT NERVE SHOWING UP IN CAPTAIN COLD'S PLACE. SWIPED YOUR BROTHER'S SECRET CODE TO CALL US ALL HERE, DID YOU?

A WOMAN CAN'T BE TOO CAREFUL. ONE NEVER KNOWS WHO TO TRUST.

16

DO YOU KNOW WHERE I'VE BEEN KEEPING MYSELF? IN THE HOSPITAL!

Uh... FEELING BETTER, I HOPE!

IT COULD HAVE BEEN PRISON!

SOMEBODY--A MAN-- WENT TO THE POLICE ABOUT SOME OF MY RECENT ACTIVITIES.

IT MUST'VE BEEN A MAN-- WHY WOULD A WOMAN?

...BUT I TRICKED THE JUDGE! I MADE HIM THINK I WAS CRAZY!

IT WAS SO EASY TO FOOL THEM!

I IMAGINE!

SO INSTEAD I HAD A PRIVATE ROOM WITH A LOVELY VIEW OF THE ART MUSEUM.

I DON'T SUPPOSE YOU WERE THE ONE WHO TURNED ME IN, WIZARD? TRICKSTER? BOOMERANG?

NOOOO...

SNAP!

JUST CHECKING.

!!!!

THIS IS CHILLBLAINE. WE'RE A TEAM. HE TOOK CARE OF ME WHILE I WAS AWAY.

WORE A WHITE COAT, DID HE?

17

LEN SNART'S LOANING OUT HIS CAPTAIN COLD GUN?

HE DIDN'T OBJECT.

HAHAHAHAHA!

DID I MISS SOMETHING FUNNY?

WALLY! WALLY?

WALLY?

CHUNK...!

POP!

POP!

WALLY... I'M TREATING. A NEW THREE-STAR RIBS PLACE... IN CENTRAL CITY!

Reslar'a

T. Hansen

CHUNK, IF YOU JUST MAKE THE COUCH COME BACK WE'LL CALL IT SQUARE. REALLY.

MONDAY... NIGHT... IS... ALL-YOU-CAN-EAT!

?! NOW THAT *DOES* INTRIGUE ME!

YEAH... ME TOO!

18

I'VE HAD MORE ENJOYABLE TIMES AT THE FLEAS AN' ITCHERS!

DON'T RUN OFF! I HAVEN'T TOLD YOU ABOUT THE DIAMOND! THE BLACK DIAMOND!

--? I DON'T DISCRIMINATE ABOUT JEWELRY! START TALKING!

I TOLD YOU ABOUT MY VIEW OF THE ART MUSEUM. I USED TO DREAM ABOUT A BEAUTIFUL BLACK DIAMOND THERE.

A VOICE IN MY DREAMS TOLD ME. OVER AND OVER...

A VOICE FROM THE MOON!

oh, I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, THAT I'M MAKING THIS UP...

oh NO, NOOO...

I DON'T BLAME YOU. BUT I HEAR VOICES ALL THE TIME. SOMETIMES IT PAYS TO LISTEN.

NIGHT DIAMOND TO EXHIBIT.

WELL... IT *DOES* EXIST! EXHIBITING NEXT WEEK!

IF I'M NOT GETTIN' TOO PERSONAL, WHY D'YER NEED US? IT'S AN ART MUSEUM, NOT A FRIGGIN' FORTRESS OF SOLITUDE!

CHILLER-- DO WE NEED THEM?

WE DON'T NEED THEM.

NOT AT ALL.

19

CHANCES ARE ONE OF YOU WOULD HAVE GONE AFTER THE JEWEL ANYWAY. ALL WE WANT IS NON-INTERFERENCE.

I'M INVITING YOU TO JOIN US ON OUR LITTLE CAPER. HELP IF YOU LIKE--

"LEAVE THE DIAMOND TO US AND YOU CAN HAVE THE RUN OF THE MUSEUM. THERE'S PLENTY OF MERCHANDISE THERE TO SUIT EVERY TASTE. WE'LL RUN INTERFERENCE!"

hmm... YOU TAKE THE RISKS-- WE TAKE THE TAKE!

I'D SAY THE FORECAST IS CLEAR AND SUNNY!

DOESN'T EXACTLY SOUND LIKE THE ROUGH END OF THE PINEAPPLE AT THAT!

SOUNDS UNANIMOUS! JUST TELL US WHEN AND WE'LL BE THERE!

THE EXHIBIT OPENS ON TUESDAY! THAT MEANS LOTS OF PEOPLE AND A TOUCH OF EXCITEMENT! TUESDAY!

TUESDAY!

20

MONDAY!

ding dong!

CHUNK?

CHUNKSTER. CHUNKAMUNDO! THE CHUNKMAN! GOIN' TO GET RIBS! CHUNK-A-RONI! CHUNK-A-BURNIN' FUNK! CHU-U-UNK!

CHUNK, YOU'RE WAY EARLY.

"I CHUNK WAS REALLY GRATEFUL. SWEET KID. HE DIDN'T HAVE TO, OF COURSE, BUT I'VE GOT A SAYING: 'RIBS IS RIBS!'"

"ACTUALLY, HE WASN'T. IT WAS JUST ME, IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME..."

"BY SOMEBODY'S ESTIMATION."

21

POKE!

ZWOOBA!

ZWOOBA ZWOOBA

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF! JAMES J. TRICKSTER. SOO-PER-GEENN-YUS!

HELLO--?

GUARD? HELLO, GUARD...?

CLOSED MONDAY, I KNOW, BUT THERE'S GOTTA BE A GUARD!

SSSSIZZ-ZZXX!

ELECTRIC EYE-- SHORTED OUT?!

SECURITY DOWN?... THAT'S NOT GOOD.

NOW WHAT'S THIS NOISE?

ZZAP

CRACK!

ZAP!

BEA TRICKSTER RULZ

IT'S VERY SIMPLE TO REMEMBER: "BOLT, AND YOU GET A BOLT"!

P-PLEASE-- LET US OUT!

OW!

ALLOW ME TO INTRODUCE MYSELF!

23

JAMES J. TRICKSTER: SOO-PER GEEEE-EE-NYUS!

YOU CHEATED! THIS JOB'S NOT UNTIL TOMORROW NIGHT!

LOOK WHO'S TALKING?

I'M THE TRICKSTER! I'M ALLOWED TO CHEAT!

ZZAPP!

OW!

SO WHERE IS THIS BLACK BEAUTY?

DIAMOND... DIAMOND... ONE FLIGHT UP, I THINK.

LOOKING FOR SOMETHING?

BOOMERANGS!

AW, HELL!

'S OKAY, MATES! I'D RATHER SHARE THE WEALTH WITH YOU PAIR O' LARRIKINS THAN WITH THE ICE PRINCESS AND ROOT-FACE!

YER SPOILED MY ENTRANCE, DUBBO! THIS WAY, C'MON!

NOT TO GET ALL MISTY, BUT WE DO GO WAY BACK, DON'T WE?

24

ALL WE'RE MISSING IS THE GUY IN THE RED SUIT, AND I DON'T MEAN SANDY CLAUS!

THE FLASH WAS A STRAIGHT SHOOTER. HE BEAT US EVERY TIME, AND YOU CAN'T TAKE THAT AWAY FROM HIM.

THAT NEW WALLY WEST HAS BIG BOOTS TO FILL. I NEVER HAVE TAKEN A SHINE TO HIM.

BSA

TRUE ENOUGH, MATES--

BOOM!

SO--THIS IS THE FAMOUS BLACK DIAMOND OF SPINACHOVA!

AIN'T SO MUCH TO LOOK AT!

DOESN'T EVEN SPARKLE!

FRANKLY, I DON'T THINK IT'D BE AS MUCH FUN TO WATCH 'IM DIE!

WELL, LOOK WHO'S HERE. 24 HOURS EARLY. SNAP, CRACKLE AND POP.

uh--

uh--

uh--

25

SNAP...

?

mmmm--

CRACKLE...

mmmm?

POP.

TH' MONIKER'S BOOMM-MM--M--

DON'T BE JEALOUS, CHILLER. I *CAN'T* KISS YOU JUST NOW.

I WOULDN'T WANT *YOU* TO BE POISONED, TOO!

PATUI!

SPUT! SPUT!

HOCHK!

26.

YOU'VE PROVEN MY POINT ABOUT MEN. THEY CAN'T BE TRUSTED.

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA, GOLDIE GLIDER?

WHAT IS THIS? I THOUGHT YOU WANTED THE JEWEL!

TANGANYIKA NIGHT DIAMOND

OF COURSE I DO. WOULD WE BE HERE IF I DIDN'T?

I WANT A LOT OF THINGS.

I WANT PEACE OF MIND, AND I CAN'T HAVE IT KNOWING THAT THE ONE WHO BETRAYED ME IS FREE TO DO IT AGAIN!

YOU BLAME ONE OF US?

THERE ARE A FEW OTHER SUSPECTS. DON'T WORRY, I'VE GOT ENOUGH TO GO AROUND.

YOU DAGGY WITCH, YOU'RE GONNER CARK US ALL?

I'D RATHER TEACH YOU HUMILITY. I'M HOPEFUL THAT AT LEAST ONE OF YOU WILL LEARN...

I HAVE ANTIDOTE ENOUGH FOR ONLY ONE.

ANTIDOTE? GOOD GRIEF, I THINK SHE'S SERIOUS!

PAY ATTENTION! IT'S SLOW-ACTING! IT SHOULDN'T BE DULLING YOUR MINDS YET!

ANYTHING YOU'RE FEELING NOW, YOU CAN BLAME ON YOUR OWN FEAR!

WELL? YOU WERE SO ANXIOUS TO GET STARTED...

27

AREN'T ONE OF YOU GENTLEMEN GOING TO BRING ME THE DIAMOND? THAT'S REALLY ALL YOU HAVE TO DO.

I CAN BE VERY SWEET TO MEN WHO TREAT ME NICE!

WE'RE NOT ABOUT TO LET A PSYCHOTIC FIGURE SKATER PUSH US AROUND--

'COURSE NOT.

NOO--OO...

SMASH!

ZZAP!

BLOODY HELL!

OOF!

oh, MY!

SUCH VIOLENCE! I THINK I LIKE IT!

OUT O' MY FACE, RATBAGS!

28

WHOOSH!

THIS LOVELY LADY WANTS HER BAUBLE!

YOU'RE A MISERABLE SHOT, BOOBERANG!

BOP!

BOP!

OW!

OW!

SIMPLE ENOUGH, YER HIGHNESS! NOW FOLLOW ME OUT THE DOOR AND LEAD ME TO THAT ANTI-SHREW VACCINE!

Oh, SPACK!

ohhh??

WHAT IS THIS ?

OOOOh-h-h---

?!?

CHINK

CHINK!

CLANK!

29

YOU'VE HEARD MY RULES. WHOEVER BRINGS ME THE DIAMOND--

IS VERY FORTUNATE!

"I WASN'T QUITE SURE WHAT WAS HAPPENING."

uh...

"BUT I'VE LEARNED THAT THE MOST IMPORTANT THING ABOUT RUNNING FAST..."

HAHAHAHAHAHA

"...IS KNOWING WHEN TO DO IT!"

CHNK CHNK CHNK CHNK

HA HA HA HA HA HA HA

30

RING-RING!
RING-RING!
RING-RING!
THAT... GUY.
"THERE WAS SO MUCH UNCERTAINTY. IT WAS DARK AND I WASN'T EVEN SURE WHERE THEY'D TAKEN ME."
"COULD BE A MANSION. PROBABLY A MUSEUM. ALL THE ARTIFACTS."
"I DIDN'T KNOW WHY THEY WERE CHASING ME. REVENGE I SUPPOSE."
"THIS THING AROUND MY LEG WAS SO SIMPLE AND EFFECTIVE IT STINKS! THREW OFF MY RUNNING REAL GOOD."
"AND I COULDN'T MOVE AT TOP SPEED ANYWAY. IF I BUMPED INTO A BUDDHA OR SOMETHING IN THE DARK I'D KILL MYSELF."
"THESE ARTIFACTS WERE PROBABLY PRICELESS, BUT IF IT CAME DOWN TO MY LIFE OR AN OLD STONE JAR-- WELL, THERE'S LOT'S OF OTHER OLD STUFF TO BE DUG UP!"
GUYS!
31

HE WENT THIS WAY! QUICK!

BLOODY HELL!

SLAM!

SMAK!

OW!!

"LOTS!"

?!?@*!!

!!#*@?!?

YOU SEEM PUZZLED! YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND MY PLAN, DO YOU?

NOT EXACTLY--

IF IT WAS ALL MY PLAN IT WOULD BE SIMPLE! THE OTHER VOICES COMPLICATE THINGS--

I BELIEVE THINGS ALWAYS WORK OUT FOR THE BEST, DON'T YOU?

GIVE ME A TYLENOL.

MUSEUM
ENTRANCE
BOOP BOOP BOOP
BEEP! BEEP!
HELLO?
DANGER?
33

I'VE BEATEN THE *BEST*--

NOW I'M GONNA BEAT *WALLY WEST!*

oh, BLAST!

"BOOMERANG'S TOY WAS ODD-- SHIMMERING-- DEFINITELY DANGEROUS!"

SPANG

"GOT IT! EASY!"

"SOME SORT OF LIQUID METAL? LIKE MERCURY."

OW!

-- AGAIN! -- AGAIN!

"HE SUCKERED ME. I WAS PENNED IN BY THESE PESTS!"

34

"AND, THEY WOULDN'T STOP 'TIL I WAS DOWN.!"

"OR THEY WERE!"

?

BLOODY HELL--?

SPANG!

OOF.!

OW.!

"I TEND TO THINK OF THE ROGUES GALLERY AS CLOWNS. I HAD TO REMEMBER THAT INSIDE EACH OF THEM WAS A SIDE CAPABLE OF REAL HARM..."

SMAK!

SMAK!

"WHEN THEY HAD GOOD REASON."

35

"MY ANKLE WAS KILLING ME! FIRST ORDER OF BUSINESS WAS TO GET THIS THING OFF MY--"

"MY FEET! I COULDN'T SEE MY FEET!"

"I WAS RUNNING THROUGH A FOG--OR A CLOUD--"

RUMBLE RUMBLE

"OR A--"

unnnfff!!!

SPLASH!!

AN UPSIDE-DOWN CLOUDBURST, FLASH! INSPIRED, ISN'T IT?

glub!

"COULDN'T RUN IN THIS STUFF! COULDN'T BREATHE TOO GOOD EITHER!"

36

HERE WE ARE, CHILLER! DIRECT FROM DARKEST AFRICA...

THE *REAL* TANGANYIKA NIGHT DIAMOND!

?? THE REAL--??

THIS IS --KILLING-- PRESSURE!

THE WATER IS COMING IN PULSES -- HUNDREDS OF BLOWS A MINUTE!

IT'S ENOUGH TO CAUSE DAMAGE ON THE CEILING! MAYBE I CAN USE THAT!

IF I CATCH THE WATER AGAINST MY BODY--MAKE MYSELF LESS "STREAMLINED"!.

SLAM!

I CAN RIDE THIS ELEVATOR TO THE TOP!

37

FAIR CATCH! BUT YOU STILL GOTTA GET THAT JEWEL BACK TO THE SPUNK RATS! BUCKLEY'S CHANCE O' THAT WHILE I'VE GOT A SAY!

I TOOK FLASH BY STORM AND I CAN RAIN ON YOUR PARADE TOO, BOOMERANG!

"BETWEEN WATER PULSES I COULD BRING MY LEG BACK..."

"AND LET IT RIDE THE NEXT WAVE--MY SPEED ADDING TO THE FORCE OF THE WATER!"

SWAK!

"I COULD PLAY HUMAN JACKHAMMER!"

BANGABANGABANGA

"IF I DIDN'T SHATTER MY LEG!"

oh, MOTHER!

BANGABANGABANGABANGA

SWOOSH

38

I BROUGHT IT HERE WHILE YOU WERE KIDNAPPING FLASH!

THEN WHAT ARE THE ROGUES ALL FIGHTING OVER?

TROUBLE! NEVER MIND-- JUST POUR!

POP

SMASH

NO--WAIT! DON'T!

TINKLE

JUST COME HERE!

DON'T WORRY... MY LIPS ARE SAFE.

AT LEAST-- THEY'RE NOT POISONOUS...

mmmm--

"I MIGHT HAVE BLACKED OUT FOR A SECOND -- I'M NOT SURE -- BUT THE NEXT THING I KNEW..."

AAAGH!

GIVE ME THAT!

BUZZZZ

IT JUST DAWNED ON ME -- YOU'RE ALL AFTER THE BLACK ROCK INSIDE THIS GLOBE!

YOU'RE TOO SMART FOR ME, BATMAN! I SURRENDER!

YEAH, RIGHT--

PFAFF

YOU'RE CRAZY, TRICKSTER!

OOH, YOU TAKE THAT BACK!

ZIP!

ZZZIP

YEOWCH! MY ANKLE!

OOF! *!###*!!

BEST KEEP A PROPER DISTANCE, RED! I'M NOT OUT OF SURPRISES YET!

BLOODY HELL!

WHOOSH

I'LL KILL =choke= =choke= =gag=

41

choke!

Wheeze! Gag! Choke!

"I DIDN'T LIKE THE LOOK ON TRICKSTER'S FACE! I THINK HE CAUGHT A LUNGFUL OF GRIT!"

WHOOSH!!

"IF HE'S REALLY HURT HE COULD BE CHOKING. HARD TO TELL WHEN I'M MOVING SO FAST!"

choke! Gasp! GHOSTS! I'M DEAD!

WELL? WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM, DUBBO? TAKIN' TIME OUT TO LAUGH IN ME FACE?

WELL, uh-- ACTUALLY...

I'M LOST.

LOSERS!

HEY!

RRRRR

ACTUALLY--?? WHERE THE HECK *AM* I ??

SAY, THE RORTER'S LOOKING A BIT CROOK!

PUFF--PUFF-- I DON'T THINK SHE WAS FOOLING ABOUT THAT...

POISON STUFF.

I'VE FELT BETTER MYSELF.

HEY, GUYS, I DON'T KNOW MUCH, BUT I *AM* IN TUNE WITH VIBRATIONS.

ARE DIAMONDS SUPPOSED TO VIBRATE?

PUFF.. IT'S PROBABLY A BOOBY-TRAP.

LOVELY! POISONED *AND* EXPLODED! D'YER THINK SHE'LL COME BACK AND STAB US TOO?

"MY HYPER-METABOLISM WAS WORKING, AND I SAW THE DARNDEST THING..."

"A DIAMOND STARTING TO EXPLODE IN MY HANDS!"

43

Z-ZIP!

"I FIGURED IF I FELT ALONG THE WALLS I'D HAVE TO FIND A DOOR SOONER OR LATER.

"WHAT I NEEDED NOW WAS A WAY OUT OF THIS MAUSOLEUM."

ZOOM!

DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH FORCE THIS BOMB IS GONNA HAVE... I'LL TAKE IT OVER THE HILL!

Oh LOVELY! PERFECT PLACE FOR A BIG BANG!

BEGYERPARDON!

SKRAWAMM!

AS I THOUGHT! I'M DETECTING A POCKET OF LOW PRESSURE! THE TYPE THAT COULD BE CREATED BY A SNOWSTORM!

OR A COLD GUN! FOLLOW ME!

THEY'RE DOWN THERE.

FINE. KEEP OUT OF MY WAY.

"AND AT THAT MOMENT..."

"...IS WHEN MY ANKLE CHOSE TO GIVE OUT!"

OW!

KRAK

CHILLBLAINE WAS NO BARRY ALLEN...

"BUT HE WAS PRETTY DARN QUICK!"

SKIK!

uhh!

WONDERFUL, LOVER! GIVE HIM A SHOT IN THE HEAD AND THIS WILL BE OVER.

EVERYTHING WILL BE BEAUTIFUL!

NO, BABE. I CAN'T JUST KILL HIM IN COLD BLOOD.

CAN'T YOU? CHILL BLAINE, NOT COLD-BLOODED? THAT'S FUNNY!

FUNNY!!

I THOUGHT YOU'D LISTEN TO ME! BUT I GUESS YOU'RE JUST A MAN AFTER ALL!

WAP

YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BETRAYED ME, WEREN'T YOU? THIS PROVES IT!

I'VE FORCED YOU OUT IN THE OPEN; I KNEW I WOULD! YOU SEE? THE PLAN WORKED!

WHAT?

BETRAYED-- I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU THEN! DON'T BE CRAZY--

LIAR!

DON'T WORRY-- I STILL LOVE YOU--

--OR HATE YOU. WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE ?

IT'S ALL JUST FEELINGS...

AAAAI!!!

I'VE BEEN WAITING TO MEET YOU, FLASH! MY NAME IS...

...ECLIPSO.!

NEEDLESS DEATH. DOESN'T THAT MAKE YOU ANGRY?

YOU'RE SHOCKED, BUT THAT DOES ME NO GOOD AT ALL.

G-GOLDEN GLIDER IS ECLIPSO?

OR VICE VERSA.

"I'D HEARD OF ECLIPSO.! SOME SORT OF MONSTER... PRETTY POWERFUL! THIS WASN'T QUITE HOW I UNDERSTOOD HIM-- HER? IT?-- TO BE!"

YOU HAVE SOMETHING I WANT. BUT AT THE MOMENT YOU'RE NOT IN A POSITION TO GIVE IT TO ME.

WHAT CAUSES YOUR BLOOD TO BOIL, FLASH?

SADISM? RANDOM DESTRUCTION? MANSLAUGHTER?

I'LL TRY THEM ALL!

"WE'LL SEE."

48

"99/100% OF MY BRAIN WAS TELLING ME TO CUT AND RUN."

"IT'S CRAZY HOW SELDOM I LISTEN TO THAT PART!"

HOW MANY RESIDE IN THIS CITY, FLASH? HOW MANY WILL BE LEFT BY MORNING?

"I THOUGHT ECLIPSO ONLY CAME OUT DURING ECLIPSES! ONE'S DUE, BUT NOT TONIGHT."

"WHY IS HE POSSESSING GOLDEN GLIDER? I DIDN'T KNOW HE COULD DO THAT."

"MAYBE HE WAS IN THE BLACK DIAMOND! YEAH, THAT'S IT!"

YOU CAN'T DO *ANYTHING* TO STOP ME. NOT A THING.

49

WHOOM!

I'VE GOT... TO GO!

CHESTER...

FLOOF!

NOW I CAN TELL YOU WHAT I *REALLY* NEED!

ZRAK

ZRAM

ZRENN..CH

"SHE WAS TRYING TO PROVOKE A REACTION. I HAD TO STAY DETACHED!"

"THIS WASN'T A SUPER-VILLAIN; IT WAS THE DEVIL!"

"AND I HAD THE FEELING SHE WAS AFTER MY SOUL!"

50

THAT ONE LOOKS LIKE SHE NEEDS STOPPING. ANYBODY UP FOR IT?

NOT THIS BLUDGER! THAT LOOKS LIKE A JOB FOR FLASH IF I EVER SAW ONE!

IMAGINE GOLDIE GLIDER THINKIN' WE'D LAG ON HER! THERE'S HONOR AMONG THIEVES, AS THE SAYING SAYS!

EXACTLY! HOW COULD SHE THINK IT?

ANYWAY, SHE SHOULDN'T 'VE TAKEN IT PERSONALLY...

I'VE BLOWN THE WHISTLE ON YOU GUYS BEFORE, TOO!

LOOK!

Oh NO!

SMASH!

NO!

CRASH!

51

ECLIPSO WOULD LOVE FOR ME TO HANG AROUND AND HELP THESE PEOPLE-- SO SHE CAN GET ME!

MAYBE IF I GRAB THE JEWEL SHE'LL CHANGE BACK!

POW!

DIDN'T CHANGE. STOPPED THE EYE-BEAMS, THOUGH!

CHUNK! THANK HEAVEN! DO I NEED YOU NOW!

YOU CAN'T PROTECT THEM! YOU CAN'T EVEN PROTECT YOURSELF!

WALLY...

OOHHH...

52

"CHUNK COULDN'T HAVE COME AT A BETTER TIME. WITH HIS WEIRD BLACK-HOLE POWERS HE COULD SEND THIS FALLEN RUBBLE TO ANOTHER DIMENSION! MAYBE EVEN SEND ECLIPSO THERE!"

CHESTER...

UHH

DUK

UHHK

CHUNK, USE YOUR BLACK-HOLE POWER!

CHUNK? CHUNK!

WHOK WHOK WHOK WHOK

IF THAT IS YOUR *BEST*, I'M UNIMPRESSED!

53

HEY, CHUNK, DON'T MIND ME! I'M ONLY THE GUY WHO *SAVED YOUR LIFE,* REMEMBER?

MAYBE WE CAN MAKE UP DINNER NEXT WEEK! THAT'LL SQUARE THINGS, RIGHT?!

NEXT WEEK!

IF I'M *STILL* ALIVE!

NICE THOUGHT, ISN'T IT, CHUNK? ISN'T IT?!!

TIME TO GO.

"WHAT DO YOU FIGURE THE CHANCES ARE THAT I'D END UP AS A PAWN OF ECLIPSO'S?"

UH---!

THAT'S BETTER.

"STORY OF MY LIFE."

"THESE STRONG LEGS WILL CARRY ME FAR."

"HELP ME COMPLETE MY GOAL ALL THE MORE QUICKLY."

ZOOM

MAYBE WE CAN DIG THIS PLACE OUT AND FIND SOMEONE WHO KNOWS ABOUT POISONS!

MAYBE THAT. COME ON, THEN...

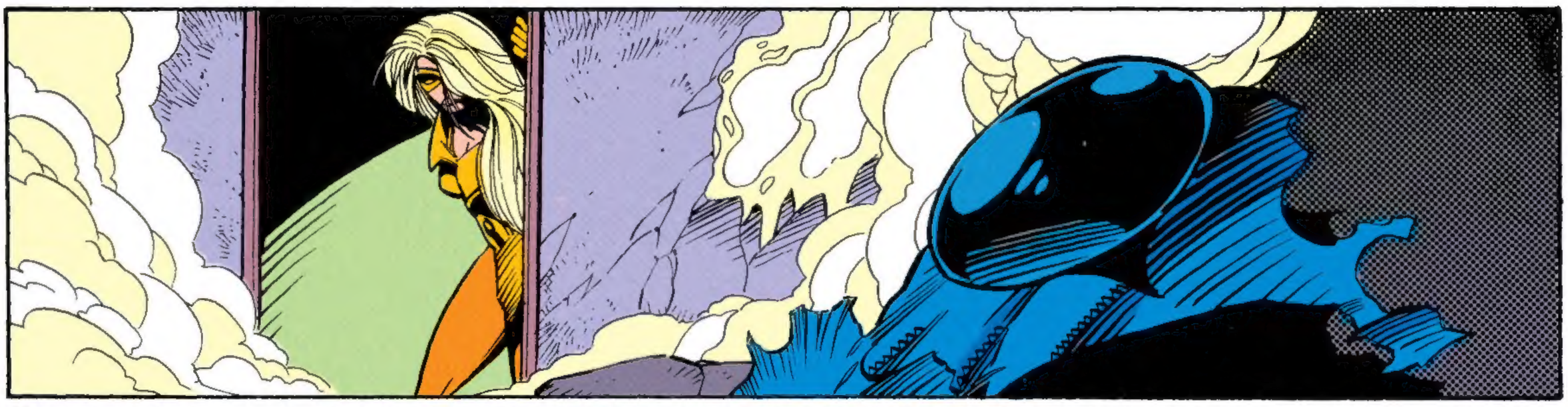
YOU KNOW, I WAS RIGHT ABOUT THAT YOUNG WALLY WEST.

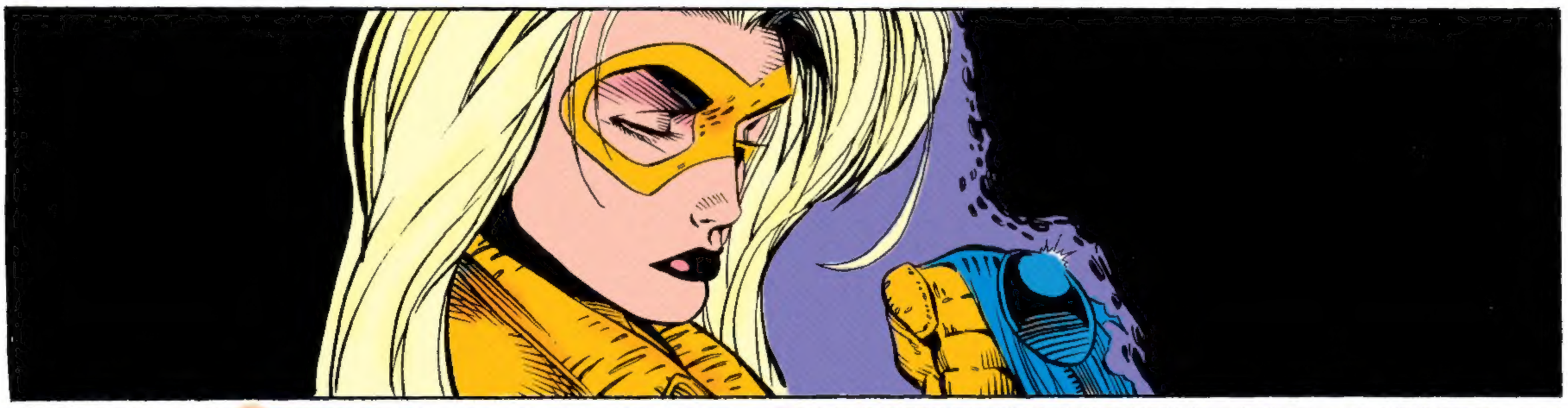
IT WASN'T SO MUCH FUN WATCHING HIM DIE.

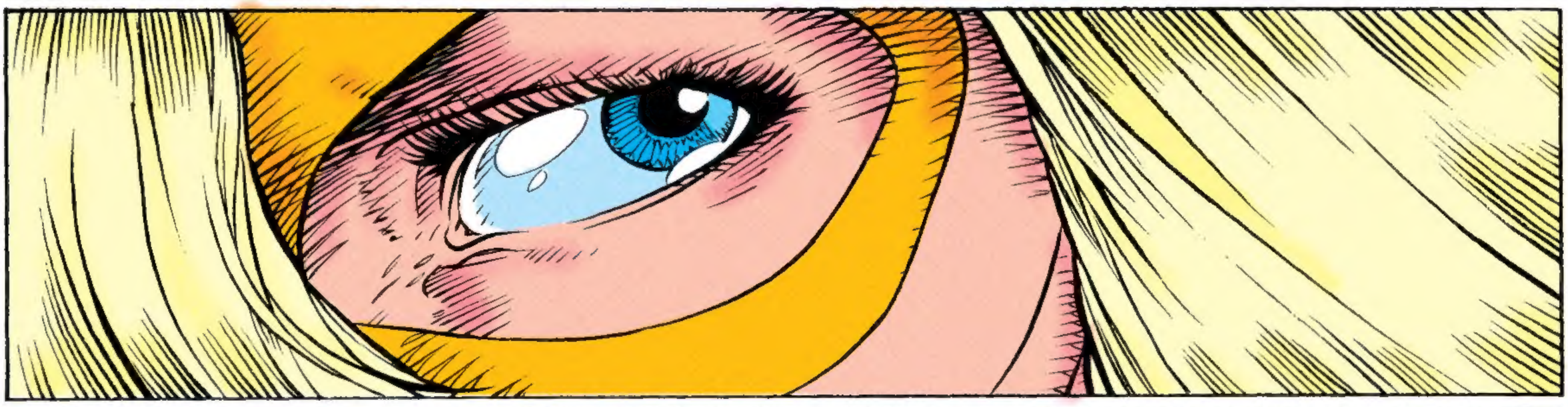
GUYS, LET'S GET GOING, OKAY?

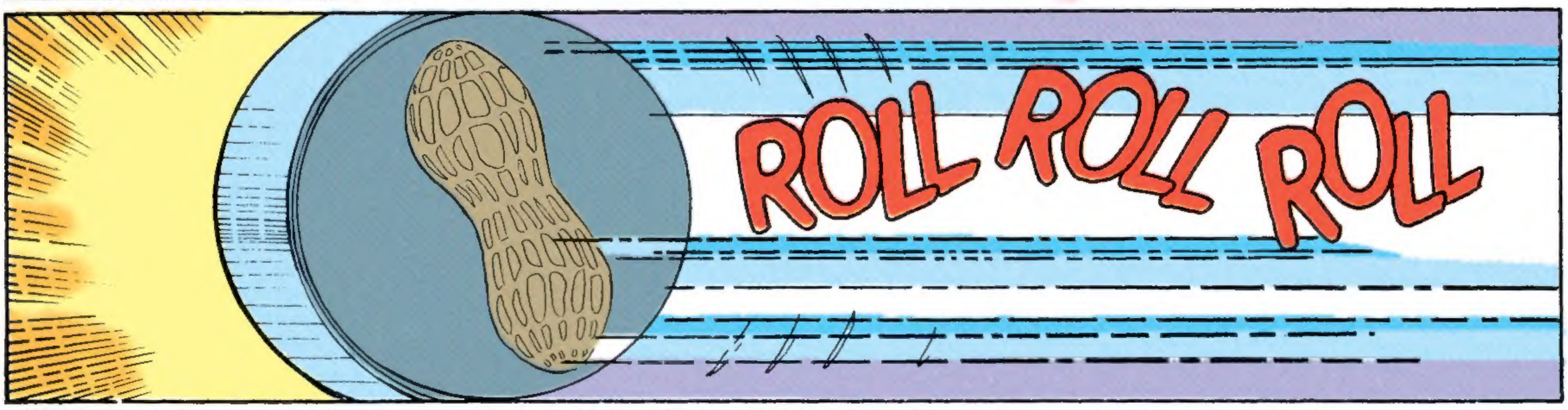
BUT... FIRST...

55

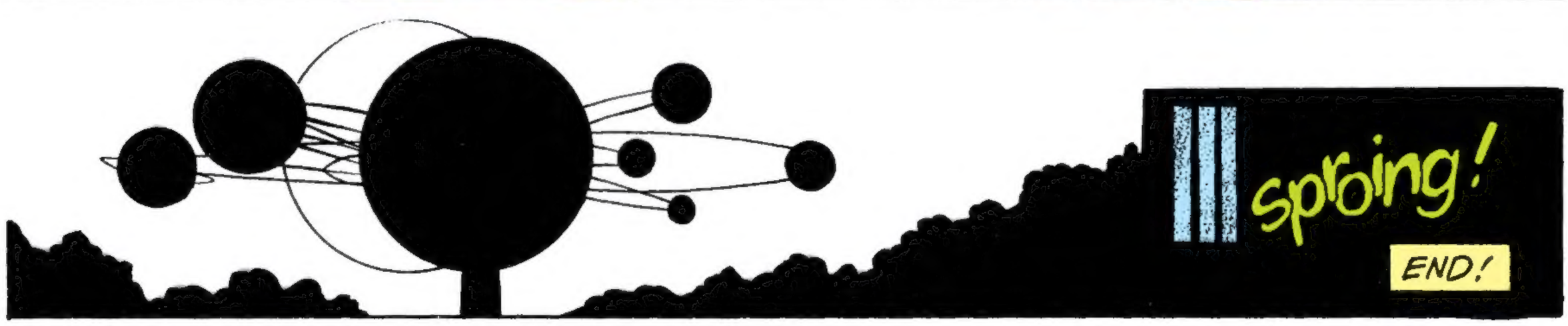







ROLL ROLL ROLL

NEW & IMPROVED


sproing!
END!

In 1990, Mark Waid's legendary writing career began when he scripted his first issue of THE FLASH. Waid would continue to work on Wally West for nearly a decade, building a world that would keep the character running for years after the writer's departure to other titles. Under Waid's keen pen, Wally West explored new depths that changed the world of THE FLASH for good.

In this book, young Wally visits his Aunt Iris and her distinctly boring fiancé, the perpetually tardy Barry Allen. Wally's life changes for good when an accident in Barry's lab gives him powers just like those of his hero—the Flash! Young Wally is quickly in danger—not only from the Flash's enemies, but from powers that he doesn't know how to control!

***THE FLASH BY MARK WAID BOOK ONE** collects THE FLASH #62-68, THE FLASH ANNUAL #4-5 and THE FLASH SPECIAL #1!*

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ZONE